This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 .S641 V.10 C.1
under dog
Stanford University Libraries
6105 047 903 120

813.3
S641

STANFORD·VNIVERSITY·LIBRARY

Volume X

"I AIN'T GOT NOBODY BUT YOU, HONEY—DON'T GO 'WAY FROM ME, CHILD."

THE NOVELS, STORIES
AND SKETCHES OF
F. HOPKINSON SMITH

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S
SONS ✱ NEW YORK

346189

COPYRIGHT, 1903, BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

STANFORD LIBRARY

CONTENTS

PAGE

NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

I. THE CRIME OF SAMANTHY NORTH . 3

II. BUD TILDEN, MAIL-THIEF . . 32

III. "ELEVEN MONTHS AND TEN DAYS" . 63

CAP'N BOB OF THE SCREAMER . . 85

A PROCESSION OF UMBRELLAS . . . 107

"DOC" SHIPMAN'S FEE 137

PLAIN FIN — PAPER-HANGER . . . 158

LONG JIM 186

COMPARTMENT NUMBER FOUR — COLOGNE TO PARIS 223

SAMMY 247

MARNY'S SHADOW 272

MUFFLES — THE BAR-KEEP . . . 300

HIS LAST CENT 322

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I AIN'T GOT NOBODY BUT YOU, RUBY— DON'T GO 'WAY FROM ME, CHILD" *Frontispiece*
FROM A DRAWING BY HENRY HUTT

FACING PAGE

I PUT MY HAND THROUGH THE BARS AND LAID IT ON HER WRIST 26
FROM A DRAWING BY A. I. KELLER

A PLACE, AT NIGHT, ALL HANGING LANTERNS AND SHADED CANDLES . . . 116
FROM A DRAWING BY E. M. ASHE

THE UNDER DOG

NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

I

THE CRIME OF SAMANTHY NORTH

I HAVE been requested to tell this story, and exactly as it happened. The moral any man may draw for himself. I only want to ask my readers the question I have been asking myself ever since I saw the girl: Why should such things be among us?

Marny's studio is over the Art Club.

He was at work on a picture of a cañon with some Sioux Indians in the foreground, while I sat beside him, watching the play of his masterly brush.

Dear old Aunt Chloe, in white apron and red bandana, her round black face dimpled with smiles, was busying herself about the room, straightening the rugs, puffing up the cushions of the divan, pushing back the easels to get at the burnt ends of abandoned cigarettes, doing her best, indeed, to bring some kind of domestic order out of Marny's Bohemian chaos.

Now and then she interpolated her efforts with such remarks as: —

"No, doan' move. De Colonel" — her sobriquet for Marny — "doan' keer whar he drap his seegars. But doan' you move, honey" — sobriquet for me. "I kin git 'em." Or "Clar to goodness, you pillows look like a passel o' hogs done trompled ye, yo 're dat mussed." Critical remarks like these last were given in a low tone, and, although addressed to the offending articles themselves, accompanied by sundry cuffs of her big hand, were really intended to convey Aunt Chloe's private opinion of the habits of her master and his friends.

The talk had drifted from men of the old frontier to border scouts, and then to the Kentucky mountaineers, whom Marny knows as thoroughly as he does the red men.

"They are a great race, these mountaineers," he said to me, as he tossed the end of another cigarette on Aunt Chloe's now clean-swept floor. Marny spoke in crisp, detached sentences between the pats of his brush. "Big, strong, whalebone-and-steel kind of fellows; rather fight than eat. Quick as lightning with a gun; dead shots. Built just like our border men. See that scout astride of his horse?" — and he pointed with his mahl-stick to a sketch on the

wall behind him — "looks like the real thing, don't he? Well, I painted him from an up-country moonshiner. Found him one morning across the river, leaning up against a telegraph pole, dead broke. Been arrested on a false charge of making whiskey without a license, and had just been discharged from the jail. Had n't money enough to cross the bridge, and was half starved. So I braced him up a little, and brought him here and painted him."

We all know with what heartiness Marny can "brace." It doubtless took three cups of coffee, half a ham, and a loaf of bread to get him on his feet, Marny watching him with the utmost satisfaction until the process was complete.

"You ought to look these fellows over; they 're worth it. Savage lot, some of 'em. Remind me of the people who live about the foothills of the Balkans. Mountaineers are the same the world over, anyway. But you don't want to hunt for these Kentuckians in their own homes unless you send word you are coming, or you may run up against the end of a rifle before you know it. I don't blame them." Marny leaned back in his chair and turned toward me. "The government is always hunting them as if they were wild beasts, instead of treating them as human beings. They can't understand why

they should n't get the best prices they can for their corn. They work hard enough to get it to grow. Their theory is that the Illinois farmer feeds the corn to his hogs and sells the product as pork, while the mountaineer feeds it to his still and sells the product to his neighbors as whiskey. That a lot of Congressmen who never hoed a row of corn in their lives, nor ran a furrow, or knew what it was to starve on the proceeds, should make laws sending a man to jail because he wants to supply his friends with liquor, is what riles them, and I don't blame them for that, either."

I arose from my chair and examined the sketch of the starving mountaineer. It was a careful study of a man with clear-cut features, slim and of wiry build, and was painted with that mastery of detail which distinguishes Marny's work over that of every other figure-painter of his time.

The painter squeezed a tube of white on his palette, relit his cigarette, fumbled over his sheaf of brushes, and continued : —

" The first of every month — just about now, by the way — they bring twenty or thirty of these poor devils down from the mountains and lock them up in Covington jail. They pass Aunt Chloe's house. Oh, Aunt Chloe ! " — and he turned to the old woman — " did you see any of

those 'wild people' the last two or three days? — that 's what she calls 'em," and he laughed.

"Dat I did, Colonel — hull drove on 'em. 'Nough to make a body sick to see 'em. Two on 'em was chained together. Dat ain't no way to treat people, if dey is ornery. I would n't treat a dog dat way."

Aunt Chloe, sole dependence of the Art Club below-stairs: day or night nurse — every student in the place knows the touch of her hand when his head splits with fever or his bones ache with cold; provider of buttons, suspender loops and buckles; go-between in most secret and confidential affairs; mail-carrier — the dainty note wrapped up in her handkerchief so as not to "spile it!" — no, *she* would n't treat a dog that way, nor anything else that lives and breathes or has feeling, human or brute.

"If there 's a new 'drove' of them, as Aunt Chloe says," remarked Marny, tossing aside his brushes, "let 's take a look at them. They are worth your study. You may never have another chance."

This was why it happened that within the hour Marny and I crossed the bridge and left his studio and the city behind us.

The river below was alive with boats, the clouds of steam from their funnels wreathed

about the spans. Street-cars blocked the roadway; tugging horses, sweating under the lash of their drivers' whips, strained under heavy loads. The air was heavy with coal smoke. Through the gloom of the haze, close to the opposite bank, rose a grim, square building of granite and brick, its grimy windows blinking through iron bars. Behind these, shut out from summer clouds and winter snows, bereft of air and sunshine, deaf to the song of happy birds and the low hum of wandering bees, languished the outcast and the innocent, the vicious and the cruel. Hells like these are the infernos civilization builds in which to hide its mistakes.

Marny turned toward me as we reached the prison. "Keep close," he whispered. "I know the Warden and can get in without a permit;" and he mounted the steps and entered a big door opening into a cold, bare hall with a sanded floor. To the right of the hall swung another door labelled "Chief of Police." Behind this door was a high railing closed with a wooden gate. Over this scowled an officer in uniform.

"My friend Sergeant Cram," said Marny, as he introduced us. The officer and I shook hands. The hand was thick and hard, the knotted knuckles leaving an unpleasant impression behind them as they fell from my fingers.

A second door immediately behind this one was now reached, the Sergeant acting as guide. This door was of solid wood, with a square panel cut from its centre, the opening barred like a bird-cage. Peering through these bars was the face of another attendant. This third door, at a mumbled word from the Sergeant, was opened wide enough to admit us into a room in which half a dozen deputies were seated at cards. In the opposite wall hung a fourth door, of steel and heavily barred, through which, level with the eyes, was cut a peep-hole concealed by a swinging steel disk.

The Sergeant moved rapidly across the room, pushed aside the disk, and brought to view the nose and eyes of a prison guard.

As our guide shot back a bolt, a click like the cocking of a gun sounded through the room, followed by the jangle of a huge iron ring strung with keys. Selecting one from the number, he pushed it into the key-hole and threw his weight against the door. At its touch the mass of steel swung inward noiselessly as the door of a bank vault. With the swinging of the door there reached us the hot, stuffy smell of unwashed bodies under steam heat — the unmistakable odor that one sometimes meets in a court-room.

Marny and I stepped inside. The Sergeant closed the slab of steel, locking us inside, and then, nodding to us through the peep-hole, returned to his post in the office.

We stood now on the rim of the crater, looking straight into the inferno. By means of the dull light that struggled through the grimy, grated windows, I discovered that we were in a corridor having an iron floor that sprang up and down under our feet. This was flanked by a line of steel cages — huge beast dens really — reaching to the ceiling. In each of these cages was a small, double-barred gate.

These dens were filled with men and boys; some with faces thrust through the bars, some with hands and arms stretched out as if for air; one hung halfway up the bars, clinging with hands and feet apart, as if to get a better hold and better view. I had seen dens like these before: the man-eating Bengal tiger at the London Zoo lives in one of them.

The Warden, who was standing immediately behind the attendant, stepped forward and shook Marny's hand. I discharged my obligations with a nod. I had never been in a place like this before, and the horror of its surroundings overcame me. I misjudged the Warden, no doubt. That this man might have

a wife who loved him and little children who clung to his neck, and that underneath his hard, forbidding exterior a heart could beat with any tenderness, never occurred to me. As I looked him over with a half-shrinking glance, I became aware of a slash indenting his pock-marked cheek that might have been made by a sabre cut — was, probably, for it takes a brave man to be a warden; a massive head set on big shoulders; a square chin, the jaw hinged like a burglar's jimmy; and two keen, restless, elephant eyes.

But it was his right ear that absorbed my attention — or rather, what was left of his right ear. Only the point of it stuck up; the rest was clipped as clean as a rat-terrier's. Some fight to a finish, I thought; some quick uppercut of the razor of a frenzied negro writhing under the vise-like grasp of this man-gorilla with arms and hands of steel; or some sudden whirl of a stiletto, perhaps, which had missed his heart and taken his ear. I did not ask then, and I do not know now. It was a badge of courage, whatever it was — a badge which thrilled and horrified me. As I looked at the terrible mutilation, I could but recall the hideous fascination that overcame Josiane, the heroine of Hugo's great novel, "The Man Who

Laughs," when she first caught sight of Gwynplaine's mouth — slit from ear to ear by the Comprachicos. The outrage on the Warden was not so grotesque, but the effect was the same.

I moved along the corridor and stood before the beasts. One, an old man in a long white beard, leathery, sun-tanned face, and hooked nose, clasped the bars with both hands, gazing at us intently. I recognized his kind the moment I looked at him. He was like my Jonathan Gordon, my old fisherman who lived up in the Franconia Notch. His coarse, homespun clothes, dyed brown with walnut-shells, slouch hat crowning his shock of gray hair, and hickory shirt open at the throat, only heightened the resemblance; especially the hat canted over one eye. Why he wore the hat in such a place I could not understand, unless to be ready for departure when his summons came.

There were eight other beasts besides this old man in the same cage, one a boy of twenty, who leaned against the iron wall with his hands in his pockets, his eyes following my every movement. I noticed a new blue patch on one of his knees, which his mother doubtless had sewn with her own hands, her big-rimmed spectacles on her nose, the tallow dip lighting

the log cabin. I recognized the touch. And the boy. I used to go swimming with one just like him, forty years ago, in an old swimming-hole in the back pasture, and hunt for honey that the bumblebees had stored under the bank.

The old man with the beard and the canting hat looked into my eyes keenly, but he did not speak. He had nothing to say, perhaps. Something human had moved before him, that was all; something that could come and go at its pleasure and break the monotony of endless hours.

"How long have you been here?" I asked, lowering my voice and stepping closer to the bars.

Somehow I did not want the others to hear. It was almost as though I were talking to Jonathan — my dear Jonathan — and he behind bars!

"Eleven months and three days. Reckon I be the oldest," and he looked about him as if for confirmation. "Yes, reckon I be."

"What for?"

"Sellin'."

The answer came without the slightest hesitation and without the slightest trace in his voice of anything that betokened either sorrow for his act or shame for the crime.

"Eleven months and three days of this!" I repeated to myself. Instinctively my mind went back to all I had done, seen, and enjoyed in these eleven months and three days. Certain individual incidents more delightful than others stood out clear and distinct: that day under the trees at Cookham, the Thames slipping past, the white-sailed clouds above my tent of leaves; a morning at Dort, when Peter and I watched the Dutch luggers anchor off the quay, and the big storm came up; a night beyond San Giorgio, when Luigi steered the gondola in mid-air over a sea of mirrored stars and beneath a million incandescent lamps.

I passed on to the next cage, Marny watching me but saying nothing. The scout was in this one, the "type" in Marny's sketch. There were three of them, — tall, hickory-sapling sort of young fellows, with straight legs, flat stomachs, and thin necks, like that of a race-horse. One had the look of an eagle, with his beak nose and deep-set, uncowed eyes. Another wore his yellow hair long on his neck, Custer-fashion. The third sat on the iron floor, his knees level with his chin, his head in his hand. He had a sweetheart, perhaps, who loved him, or an old mother who was wringing her hands at home. This one, I learned afterward,

had come with the last batch and was not yet accustomed to his surroundings; the others had been awaiting trial for months. All of them wore homespun clothes — not the ready-made clothes sold at the stores, but those that some woman at home had cut, basted, and sewn.

Marny asked them what they were up for. Their answers differed slightly from that of the old man, but the crime and its penalty were the same.

"Makin'," they severally replied.

There was no lowering of the eyelids when they confessed; no hangdog look about the mouth. They would do it again when they got out, and they intended to, only they would shoot the quicker next time. The earth was theirs and the fulness thereof, that part of it which they owned. Their grandfathers before them had turned their corn into whiskey and no man had said nay, and so would they. Not the corn that they had stolen, but the corn that they had ploughed and shucked. It was their corn, not the government's. Men who live in the wilderness, and feed and clothe themselves on the things they raise with their own hands, have no fine-spun theories about the laws that provide revenue for a government they never

saw, don't want to see, and could n't understand if they did.

Marny and I stood before the grating, looking each man over separately. Strange to say, the artistic possibilities of my visit faded out of my mind. The picturesqueness of their attire, the browns and grays accentuated here and there by a dash of red around a hat-band or shirt-collar, — all material for my own or my friend's brush, — made not the slightest impression upon me. It was the close smell, the dim, horrible light, the quick gleam of a pair of eyes looking out from under shocks of matted hair — the eyes of a panther watching his prey; the dull stare of some boyish face with all hope crushed out of it; these were the things that possessed me.

As I stood there absorbed in the terrors before me, I was startled by the click of the catch and the clink of keys, followed by the noiseless swing of the steel door as it closed again.

I turned and looked down the corridor.

Into the gloom of this inferno, this foul-smelling cavern, this assemblage of beasts, stepped a girl of twenty. A baby wrapped about with a coarse shawl lay in her arms.

She passed me with eyes averted, and stood

before the gate of the last steel cage, — the woman's end of the prison, — the turnkey following slowly. Cries of " Howdy, gal! What did ye git? " were hurled after her, but she made no answer. The ominous sound of drawn bolts and the click of a key, and the girl and baby were inside the bars of the cage. These bars, foreshortened from where I stood, looked like a row of gun-barrels in an armory rack.

" That girl a prisoner? " I asked the Warden.

I didn't believe it. I knew, of course, that it could n't be. I instantly divined that she had come to comfort some brother or father, or lover, perhaps, and had brought the baby with her because there was no place to leave it at home. I only asked the question of the Warden so he could deny it, and deny it, too, with some show of feeling — this man with the sliced ear and the gorilla hands.

" Yes, she 's been here some time. Judge suspended sentence a while ago. She 's gone after her things."

There was no joy over her release in his tones, nor pity for her condition.

He spoke exactly, it seemed to me, as he would have done had he been in charge of the iron-barred gate of the Colosseum two thousand years ago. All that had saved the girl then

from the jaws of his hungriest lion was the twist of Nero's thumb. All that saved her now was the nod of the Judge's head — both had the giving of life and death.

A thin mist swam before my eyes, and a great lump started from my heart and stuck fast in my throat, but I did not answer him; it would have done no good — might have enraged him, in fact. I walked straight to the gate through which she had entered and peered in. I could see between the gun-barrels now.

It was like the other cages, with barred walls and sheet-iron floors. Built in one corner of the far end was a strong box of steel, six feet by four by the height of the ceiling, fitted with a low door. This box was lined with a row of bunks, one above the other. From one was thrust a small foot covered with a stocking and part of a skirt; some woman prisoner was ill, perhaps. Against the wall of this main cage sat two negro women; one, I learned afterward, had stabbed a man the week before; the other was charged with theft. The older — the murderess — came forward when she caught sight of me, thrust out her hands between the bars, and begged for tobacco.

In the corner of the same cage was another steel box. I saw the stooping figure of the

young girl come out of it as a dog comes out of a kennel. She walked toward the centre of the cage — she still had the baby in her arms — laid the child on the sheet-iron floor, where the light from the grimy windows fell the clearer, and returned to the steel box. The child wore but one garment — a short red-flannel shirt that held the stomach tight and left the shrivelled legs and arms bare. It lay flat on its back, its eyes gazing up at the ceiling, its pinched face in high light against the dull background. Now and then it would fight the air with its little fists or kick its toes above its head.

The girl took from the kennel a broken paper box and, returning with it, knelt beside the child and began arranging its wardrobe, the two negresses watching her listlessly. Not much of a wardrobe — only a ragged shawl, some socks, a worsted cap, a pair of tiny shoes, and a Canton-flannel wrapper, once white. This last had little arms and a short waist. The skirt was long enough to tuck around her baby's feet when she carried it.

I steadied myself by one of the musket-barrels, watched her while she folded the few pitiful garments, waited until she had guided the shrunken arms into the sleeves of the soiled wrapper and had buttoned it over the baby's

chest. Then, when the lump in my throat was about to stop my breathing, I said, —

"Will you come here, please, to the grating? I want to speak to you."

She raised her head slowly, looked at me in a tired, hopeless way, laid her baby back on the sheet-iron floor, and walked toward me. As she came into the glow of the overhead light, I saw that she was even younger than I had first supposed — nearer seventeen than twenty — a girl with something of the curious look of a young heifer in a face drawn and lined, but with anxiety. Parted over a low forehead, and tucked behind her ears, streamed two braids of straight yellow hair in two unkempt strands over her shoulders. Across her bosom and about her slender figure was hooked a yellow-brown dress made in one piece. The hooks and eyes showed wherever the strain came, disclosing the coarse chemise and the brown of the neck beneath. This strain, the strain of an ill-fitting garment, accentuated all the clearer, in the wrinkles about the shoulders and around the hips, the fulness of her delicately modelled lines; quite as would a jacket buttoned over the Milo. On the third finger of one hand was a flat silver ring, such as is sold by the country pedlers.

She stood quite close to the bars, patiently

awaiting my next question. She had obeyed my summons like a dog who remembered a former discipline. No curiosity, not the slightest interest; nothing but blind obedience. The tightened grasp of these four walls had taught her this.

"Where do you come from?" I asked.

I had to begin in some way.

"From Pineyville." The voice was that of a child, with a hard, dry note in it.

"How old is the baby?"

"Three months and ten days." She had counted the child's age. She had thought enough for that.

"How far is Pineyville?"

"I doan' know. It took mos' all night to git here." There was no change in the listless monotone.

"Are you going out now?"

"Yes, soon 's I kin git ready."

"How are you going to get home?"

"Walk, I reckon." There was no complaint in her tone, no sudden exhibition of any suffering. She was only stating facts.

"Have you no money?"

"No." Same bald statement, and in the same hopeless tone. She had not moved — not even to look at the child.

"What 's the fare ? "

"Six dollars and sixty-five cents." This was stated with great exactness. It was the amount of this appalling sum that had, no doubt, crushed out her last ray of hope.

"Did you sell any whiskey ? "

"Yes, I tol' the Judge so."

Still no break in her voice. It was only another statement.

"Oh ! you kept a saloon ? "

"No."

"How did you sell it, then ? "

"Jest out of a kag — in a cup."

"Had you ever sold any before ? "

"No."

"Why did you sell it, then ? "

She had been looking into my face all this time, one thin, begrimed hand — the one with the ring on it — tight around the steel bar of the gate that divided us. With the question, her eyes dropped until they seemed to rest on this hand. The answer came slowly : —

"The baby come, and the store would n't chalk nothin' for us no more." Then she added quickly, as if in defence of the humiliating position, "Our corn-crib was sot afire last fall and we got behind."

For a brief instant she leaned heavily against

the bars as if for support, then her eyes sought her child. I waited until she had reassured herself of its safety, and continued my questions, my finger-nails sinking deeper all the time into the palms of my hands.

"Did you make the whiskey?"

"No, it was Martin Young's whiskey. My husband works for him. Martin sent the kag down one day, and I sold it to the men. I give the money all to Martin 'cept the dollar he was to gimme for sellin' it."

"How came you to be arrested?"

"One o' the men tol' on me 'cause I would n't trust him. Martin tol' me not to let 'em have it 'thout they paid."

"How long have you been here?"

"Three months next Tuesday."

"That baby only two weeks old when they arrested you?" My blood ran hot and cold, and my collar seemed five sizes too small, but I still held on to myself.

"Yes." The answer was given in the same monotonous, listless voice — not a trace of indignation over the outrage. Women with suckling babies had no rights that anybody was bound to respect — not up in Pineyville; certainly not the gentlemen with brass shields under the lapels of their coats and Uncle Sam's

commissions in their pockets. It was the law of the land — why find fault with it?

I leaned closer so that I could touch her hand if need be.

"What 's your name?"

"Samanthy North."

"What 's your husband's name?"

"His name 's North." There was a trace of surprise now in the general monotone. Then she added, as if to leave no doubt in my mind, "Leslie North."

"Where is he?" I determined now to round up every fact.

"He 's home. We 've got another child, and he 's takin' care of it till I git back. He 'd be to the railroad for me if he knowed I was coming; but I could n't tell him when to start 'cause I did n't know how long they 'd keep me."

"Is your home near the railroad?"

"No, it 's thirty-six miles furder."

"How will you get from the railroad?"

"Ain't no way 'cept walkin'."

I had it now, the whole damnable, pitiful story, every fact clear-cut to the bone. I could see it all: the look of terror when the deputy woke her from her sleep and laid his hand upon her; the parting with the other child; the fright

of the helpless husband; the midnight ride, she hardly able to stand, the pitiful scrap of her own flesh and blood tight in her arms; the procession to the jail, the men in front chained together, she bringing up the rear, walking beside the last guard; the first horrible night in jail, the walls falling upon her, the darkness overwhelming her, the puny infant resting on her breast; the staring, brutal faces when the dawn came, followed by the coarse jest. No wonder that she hung limp and hopeless to the bars of her cage, all the spring and buoyancy, all the youth and lightness, crushed out of her.

I put my hand through the bars and laid it on her wrist.

"No, you won't walk; not if I can help it." This outburst got past the lump slowly, one word at a time, each syllable exploding hot like balls from a Roman candle. "You get your things together quick as you can, and wait here until I come back," and I turned abruptly and motioned to the turnkey to open the gate.

In the office of the Chief of Police outside I found Marny talking to Sergeant Cram. He was waiting until I finished. It was all an old story with Marny — every month a new batch came to Covington jail.

"What about that girl, Sergeant — the one

with the baby?" I demanded in a tone that made them both turn quickly.

"Oh, she 's all right. She told the Judge a straight story this morning, and he let her go on 'spended sentence. They tried to make her plead 'Not guilty,' but she would n't lie about it, she said. She can go when she gets ready. What are you drivin' at? Are you goin' to put up for her?" — and a curious look overspread his face.

"I 'm going to get her a ticket and give her some money to get home. Locking up a seventeen-year-old girl, two hundred miles from home, in a den like that, with a baby two weeks old, may be justice, but I call it brutality! Our government can pay its expenses without that kind of revenue." The whole bundle of Roman candles was popping now — inconsequent, wholly illogical, utterly indefensible explosions. But only my heart was working.

The Sergeant looked at Marny, relaxed the scowl about his eyebrows, and smiled; such "softies" seemed rare to him.

"Well, if you 're stuck on her — and I 'm damned if I don't believe you are — let me give you a piece of advice. Don't give her no money till she gets on the train, and whatever you do, don't leave her here overnight. There 's a gang

I PUT MY HAND THROUGH THE BARS AND LAID IT ON HER WRIST.

around here" — and he jerked his thumb in the direction of the door — "that might" — and he winked knowingly.

"You don't mean" — A cold chill suddenly developed near the roots of my hair and trickled to my spine.

"Well, she 's too good-lookin' to be wanderin' round huntin' for a boardin'-house. You see her on the train, that 's all. Starts at eight to-night. That 's the one they all go by — those who git out and can raise the money. She ought to leave now, 'cordin' to the regulations, but as long as you 're a friend of Mr. Marny's I 'll keep her here in the office till I go home at seven o'clock. Then you 'd better have some one to look after her. No, you need n't go back and see her" — this in answer to a movement I made toward the prison door. "I 'll fix everything. Mr. Marny knows me."

I thanked the Sergeant, and we started for the air outside — something we could breathe, something with a sky overhead and the dear earth underfoot, something the sun warmed and the free wind cooled.

Only one thing troubled me now. I could not take the girl to the train myself, neither could Marny, for I had promised to lecture that same night for the Art Club at eight o'clock,

and Marny was to introduce me. The railroad station was three miles away.

"I've got it!" cried Marny, when we touched the sidewalk, elbowing our way among the crowd of loafers who always swarm about a place of this kind. (He was as much absorbed in the girl's future, when he heard her story, as I was.) "Aunt Chloe lives within two blocks of us — let's hunt her up. She ought to be at home by this time."

The old woman was just entering her street door when she heard Marny's voice, her basket on her arm, a rabbit-skin tippet about her neck.

"Dat I will, honey," she answered positively, when the case was laid before her. "*Dat I will;* 'deed an' double I will."

She stepped into the house, left her basket, joined us again on the sidewalk, and walked with us back to the sheriff's office.

"All right," said the Sergeant, when we brought her in. "Yes, I know the old woman; the gal will be ready for her when she comes, but I guess I'd better send one of my men along with 'em both far as the depot. Ain't no use takin' no chances."

The dear old woman followed us again until we found a clerk in a branch ticket-office, who

picked out a long green slip from a library of tickets, punched it with the greatest care with a pair of steel nippers, and slipped it into an official envelope labelled: "K. C. Pineyville, Ky. 8 P. M."

With this tightly grasped in her wrinkled brown hand, together with another package of Marny's many times in excess of the stage fare of thirty-six miles, and which she slipped into her capacious bosom, Aunt Chloe "made her manners" with the slightest dip of a courtesy and left us with the remark: —

"Shan't nothin' tech her, honey; gwineter stick right close to her till de steam-cars git to movin'. I 'll be over early in de mawnin' an' let ye know. Doan' worry, honey; ain't nothin' gwineter happen to her arter I gits my han's on her."

When I came down to breakfast, Aunt Chloe was waiting for me in the hall. She looked like the old woman in the fairy-tale, in her short black dress that came to her shoe-tops, snow-white apron and headkerchief, covered by a close-fitting nunlike hood, — only the edge of the handkerchief showed, — making her seem the old black saint that she was. It not being one of her cleaning days, she had "kind o' spruced herself up a li'l mite," she said. She carried

her basket, covered now with a white starched napkin instead of the red-and-yellow bandana of workdays. No one ever knew what this basket contained. "Her luncheon," some of the art students said; but if it did, no one had ever seen her eat it. "Some one else's luncheon," Marny added; "some sick body whom she looks after. There are dozens of them."

"Larrovers fur meddlins," Aunt Chloe invariably answered those whose curiosity got the better of their discretion — an explanation which only deepened the mystery, no one being able to translate it.

"She 's safe, honey!" Aunt Chloe cried, when she caught sight of me. "I toted de baby, an' she toted de box. Po' li'l chinkapin! Mos' break a body's heart to see it! 'Clar to goodness, dat chile's leg warn't bigger 'n a drumstick picked to de bone. De man de Sheriff sent wid us did n't go no furder dan de gate, an' when he lef' us dey all sneaked in an' did dere bes' ter git her from me. Wuss-lookin' harum-scarums you ever see. Kep' a-tellin' her de ticket was good for ten days an' dey 'd go wid her back to town; an' dat if she 'd stay dey 'd take her 'cross de ribber to see de city. I seed she wanted ter git home to her husban', an' she tol' 'em so.

Den dey tried to make her believe he was comin' for her, an' dey pestered her so an' got her so mixed up wid dere lies dat I was feared she was gwine to give in, arter all. She warn't nothin' but a po' weak thing noways. Den I riz up an' tol' 'em dat I 'd call a pleeceman an' take dat ticket from her an' de money I gin her beside, if she did n't stay on dat car. I did n't give her de 'velope; I had dat in my han' to show de conductor when he come, so he could see whar she was ter git off. Here it is" — and she handed me the ticket-seller's envelope. "Warn't nothin' else saved me but *dat*. When dey seed it, dey knowed den somebody was a-lookin' arter her an' dey give in. Po' critter! I reckon she 's purty nigh home by dis time!"

The story is told. It is all true, every sickening detail. Other stories just like it, some of them infinitely more pitiful, can be written daily by any one who will peer into the cages of Covington jail. There is nothing to be done; nothing *can* be done.

It is the law of the land — the just, holy, beneficent law, which is no respecter of persons.

II

BUD TILDEN, MAIL-THIEF

"That's Bud Tilden, the worst of the bunch," said the jail Warden — the warden with the sliced ear and the gorilla hands. "Reminds me of a cat'mount I tried to tame once, only he's twice as ugly."

As he spoke, he pointed to a prisoner in a slouch hat clinging halfway up the steel bars of his cage, his head thrust through as far as his cheeks would permit, his legs spread apart like the letter "A."

"What's he here for?" I asked.

"Robbin' the U-nited States mail."

"Where?"

"Up in the Kentucky mountains, back o' Bug Holler. Laid for the carrier one night, held him up with a gun, pulled him off his horse, slashed the bottom out o' the mail-bag with his knife, took what letters he wanted, and lit off in the woods, cool as a chunk o' ice. Oh! I tell ye, he's no sardine; you kin see that without my tellin' ye. They'll railroad him, sure."

"When was he arrested?"

"Last month — come down in the November

batch. The dep'ties had a circus 'fore they got the irons on him. Caught him in a clearin' 'bout two miles back o' the Holler. He was up in a corn-crib with a Winchester when they opened on him. Nobody was hurted, but they would a-been if they 'd showed the top o' their heads, for he 's strong as a bull and kin scalp a squirrel at fifty yards. They never would a-got him if they had n't waited till dark and smoked him out, so one on 'em told me." He spoke as if the prisoner had been a rattlesnake or a sheep-stealing wolf.

The mail-thief evidently overheard, for he dropped, with a cat-like movement, to the steel floor and stood looking at us through the bars from under his knit eyebrows, his eyes watching our every movement.

There was no question about his strength. As he stood in the glare of the overhead light I could trace the muscles through his rough homespun — for he was a mountaineer, pure and simple, and not a city-bred thief in ready-made clothes. I saw that the bulging muscles of his calves had driven the wrinkles of his butternut trousers close up under the knee-joint and that those of his thighs had rounded out the coarse cloth from the knee to the hip. The spread of his shoulders had performed a like

service for his shirt, which was stretched out of shape over the chest and back. This was crossed by but one suspender, and was open at the throat — a tree-trunk of a throat, with all the cords supporting the head firmly planted in the shoulders. The arms were long and had the curved movement of the tentacles of a devil-fish. The hands were big and bony, the fingers knotted together with knuckles of iron. He wore no collar nor any coat; nor did he bring one with him, so the Warden said.

I had begun my inventory at his feet as he stood gazing sullenly at us, his great red hands tightly clasped around the bars. When in my inspection I passed from his open collar up his tree-trunk of a throat to his chin, and then to his face, half shaded by a big slouch hat, which rested on his flaring ears, and at last looked into his eyes, a slight shock of surprise went through me. I had been examining this wild beast with my judgment already warped by the Warden; that's why I began at his feet and worked up. If I had started in on an unknown subject, prepared to rely entirely upon my own judgment, I should have begun at his eyes and worked down. My shock of surprise was the result of this upward process of inspection. An awakening of this kind, the awakening to an

injustice done a man we have half understood, often comes after years of such prejudice and misunderstanding. With me this awakening came with my first glimpse of his eyes.

There was nothing of the Warden's estimate in these eyes; nothing of cruelty nor deceit nor greed. Those I looked into were a light blue — a washed-out china blue; eyes that shone out of a good heart rather than out of a bad brain; not very deep eyes; not very expressive eyes; dull, perhaps, but kindly. The features were none the less attractive; the mouth was large, well shaped, and filled with big white teeth, not one missing; the nose straight, with wide, well-turned nostrils; the brow low, but not cunning nor revengeful; the chin strong and well modelled, the cheeks full and of good color. A boy of twenty I should have said — perhaps twenty-five; abnormally strong, a big animal with small brain power, perfect digestion, and with every function of his body working like a clock. Photograph his head and come upon it suddenly in a collection of others, and you would have said: "A big country bumpkin who ploughs all day and milks the cows at night." He might be the bloodthirsty ruffian, the human wild beast, the Warden had described, but he certainly did not look it. I would

like to have had just such a man on any one of my gangs with old Captain Joe over him. He would have fought the sea with the best of them and made the work of the surf-men twice as easy if he had taken a hand at the watch-tackles.

I turned to the Warden again. My own summing up differed materially from his estimate, but I did not thrust mine upon him. He had had, of course, a much wider experience among criminals — I, in fact, had had none at all — and could not be deceived by outward appearances.

"You say they are going to try him to-day?" I asked.

"Yes, at two o'clock. Nearly that now," and he glanced at his watch. "All the witnesses are down, I hear. They claim there 's something else mixed up in it besides robbing the mail, but I don't remember what. So many of these cases comin' and goin' all the time! His old father was in to see him yesterday, and a girl. Some o' the men said she was his sweetheart, but he don't look like that kind. You oughter seen his father, though. Greatest jay you ever see. Looked like a fly-up-the-creek. Girl warn't much better lookin'. They make 'em out o' brick-clay and ham-fat up in them

mountains. Ain't human, half on 'em. Better go over and see the trial."

I waited in the Warden's office until the deputies came for the prisoner. When they had formed in line on the sidewalk I followed behind the posse, crossing the street with them to the court-house. The prisoner walked ahead, handcuffed to a deputy who was a head shorter than he and half his size. A second officer walked behind; I kept close to this rear deputy and could see every movement he made. I noticed that his fingers never left his hip-pocket and that his eye never wavered from the slouch hat on the prisoner's head. He evidently intended to take no chances with a man who could have made mince-meat of both of them had his hands been free.

We parted at the main entrance, the prisoner, with head erect and a certain fearless, uncowed look on his boyish face, preceding the deputies down a short flight of stone steps, closely followed by the officer.

The trial, I could see, had evidently excited unusual interest. When I mounted the main flight to the corridor opening into the trial chamber and entered the great hallway, it was crowded with mountaineers — wild, shaggy, unkempt-looking fellows, most of them. All were

dressed in the garb of their locality: coarse, rawhide shoes, deerskin waistcoats, rough, butternut-dyed trousers and coats, and a coonskin or army slouch hat worn over one eye. Many of them had their saddle-bags with them. There being no benches, those who were not standing were squatting on their haunches, their shoulders against the bare wall. Others were huddled close to the radiators. The smell of escaping steam from these radiators, mingling with the fumes of tobacco and the effluvia from so many closely packed human bodies, made the air stifling.

I edged my way through the crowd and pushed through the court-room door. The Judge was just taking his seat — a dull, heavy-looking man with a bald head, a pair of flabby, clean-shaven cheeks, and two small eyes that looked from under white eyebrows. Halfway up his forehead rested a pair of gold spectacles. The jury had evidently been out for luncheon, for they were picking their teeth and settling themselves comfortably in their chairs.

The court-room — a new one — outraged, as usual, in its construction every known law of proportion, the ceiling being twice too high for the walls, and the big, uncurtained windows (they were all on one side) letting in a glare of

light that made silhouettes of every object seen against it. Only by the closest attention could one hear or see in a room like this.

The seating of the Judge was the signal for the admission of the crowd in the corridor, who filed in through the door, some forgetting to remove their hats, others passing the doorkeeper in a defiant way. Each man, as soon as his eyes became accustomed to the glare from the windows, looked furtively toward the prisoners' box. Bud Tilden was already in his seat between the two deputies, his hands unshackled, his blue eyes searching the Judge's face, his big slouch hat on the floor at his feet. What was yet in store for him would drop from the lips of this face.

The crier of the court, a young negro, made his announcements.

I found a seat between the prisoner and the bench, so that I could hear and see the better. The government prosecutor occupied a seat at a table to my right, between me and the three staring Gothic windows. When he rose from his chair his body came in silhouette against their light. With his goat-beard, beak-nose, heavy eyebrows, long, black hair resting on the back of his coat-collar, bent body, loose-jointed arms, his coat-tails swaying about his thin legs,

he looked (I did not see him in any other light) like a hungry buzzard flapping his wings before taking flight.

He opened the case with a statement of facts. He would prove, he said, that this mountain ruffian was the terror of the neighborhood, in which life was none too safe; that although this was the first time he had been arrested, there were many other crimes which could be laid at his door, had his neighbors not been afraid to inform upon him.

Warming up to the subject, flapping his arms aloft like a pair of wings, he recounted, with some dramatic fervor, what he called the "lonely ride of the tried servant of the government over the rude passes of the mountains," recounting the risks which these faithful men ran; then he referred to the sanctity of the United States mails, reminding the jury and the audience — particularly the audience — of the chaos which would ensue if these sacred mail-bags were tampered with; "the stricken, tear-stained face of the mother," for instance, who had been waiting for days and weeks for news of her dying son, or "the anxious merchant brought to ruin for want of a remittance which was to tide him over some financial distress," neither of them knowing that at that very mo-

ment some highwayman like the prisoner "was fattening off the result of his theft." This last was uttered with a slapping of both hands on his thighs, his coat-tails swaying in unison. He then went on in a graver tone to recount the heavy penalties the government imposed for violations of the laws made to protect this service and its agents, and wound up by assuring the jury of his entire confidence in their intelligence and integrity, knowing, as he did, how just would be their verdict, irrespective of the sympathy they might feel for one who had preferred "the hidden walks of crime to the broad open highway of an honest life." Altering his tone again and speaking in measured accents, he admitted that, although the government's witnesses had not been able to identify the prisoner by his face, he having concealed himself in the bushes while the rifling of the pouch was in progress, yet so full a view was had of his enormous back and shoulders as to leave no doubt in his mind that the prisoner before them had committed the assault, since it would not be possible to find two such men, even in the mountains of Kentucky. As his first witness he would call the mail-carrier.

Bud had sat perfectly stolid during the harangue. Once he reached down with one long

arm and scratched his bare ankle with his forefinger, his eyes, with the gentle light in them that had first attracted me, glancing aimlessly about the room ; then he settled back again in his chair, its back creaking to the strain of his shoulders. Whenever he looked at the speaker, which was seldom, a slight curl, expressing more contempt than anxiety, crept along his lips. He was, no doubt, comparing his own muscles to those of the buzzard and wondering what he would do to him if he ever caught him out alone. Men of enormous strength generally measure the abilities of others by their own standards.

"Mr. Bowditch will take the chair!" cried the prosecutor.

At the summons, a thin, wizen-faced, stubbly-bearded man of fifty, his shirt-front stained with tobacco-juice, rose from his seat and took the stand. The struggle for possession of the bag must have been a brief one, for he was but a dwarf compared to the prisoner. In a low, constrained voice — the awful hush of the court-room had evidently impressed him — and in plain, simple words, in strong contrast to the flowery opening of the prosecutor, he recounted the facts as he knew them. He told of the sudden command to halt ; of the attack in the rear and the quick jerking of the mail-bags from be-

neath his saddle, upsetting him into the road; of the disappearance of the robber in the bushes, his head and shoulders only outlined against the dim light of the stars; of the flight of the robber, and of his finding the bag a few yards away from the place of assault with the bottom cut. None of the letters were found opened; which ones were missing he could n't say. Of one thing he was sure — none were left behind by him on the ground, when he refilled the bag.

The bag, with a slash in the bottom as big as its mouth, was then passed around the jury-box, each juror in his inspection of the cut seeming to be more interested in the way in which the bag was manufactured (some of them, I should judge, had never examined one before) than in the way in which it was mutilated. The bag was then put in evidence and hung over the back of a chair, mouth down, the gash in its bottom in full view of the jury. This gash, from where I sat, looked like one inflicted on an old-fashioned rubber football by a high kicker.

Hank Halliday, in a deerskin waistcoat and dust-stained slouch hat, which he crumpled up in his hand and held under his chin, was the next witness.

In a jerky, strained voice he told of his mailing a letter, from a village within a short dis-

tance of Bug Hollow, to a girl friend of his, on the afternoon of the night of the robbery. He swore positively that this letter was in this same mail-bag, because he had handed it to the carrier himself before he got on his horse, and added, with equal positiveness, that it had never reached its destination. The value or purpose of this last testimony, the non-receipt of the letter, was not clear to me, except upon the theory that the charge of robbery might fail if it could be proved by the defence that no letter was missing.

Bud fastened his eyes on Halliday and smiled as he made this last statement about the undelivered letter, the first smile I had seen across his face, but gave no other sign indicating that Halliday's testimony affected his chances in any way.

Then followed the usual bad-character witnesses — both friends of Halliday, I could see; two this time — one charging Bud with all the crimes in the decalogue, and the other, under the lead of the prosecutor, launching forth into an account of a turkey-shoot in which Bud had wrongfully claimed the turkey — an account which was at last cut short by the Judge in the midst of its most interesting part, as having no particular bearing on the case.

Up to this time no one had appeared for the accused, nor had any objection been made to any part of the testimony except by the Judge. Neither had any one of the prosecutor's witnesses been asked a single question in rebuttal.

With the resting of the government's case a dead silence fell upon the room.

The Judge waited a few moments, the tap of his lead-pencil sounding through the stillness, and then asked if the attorney for the defence was ready.

No one answered. Again the Judge put the question, this time with some impatience.

Then he addressed the prisoner.

"Is your lawyer present?"

Bud bent forward in his chair, put his hands on his knees, and answered slowly, without a tremor in his voice: —

"I ain't got none. One come yisterday to the jail, but he did n't like what I tol' him and he ain't showed up since."

A spectator sitting by the door, between an old man and a young girl, both evidently from the mountains, rose to his feet and walked briskly to the open space before the Judge. He had sharp, restless eyes, wore gloves, and carried a silk hat in one hand.

"In the absence of the prisoner's counsel,

your Honor," he said, "I am willing to go on with this case. I was here when it opened and have heard all the testimony. I have also conferred with some of the witnesses for the defence."

"Did I not appoint counsel in this case yesterday?" said the Judge, turning to the clerk.

There was a hurried conference between the two, the Judge listening wearily, cupping his ear with his hand, and the clerk rising on his toes so that he could reach his Honor's hearing the easier.

"It seems," said the Judge, resuming his position, and addressing the room at large, "that the counsel already appointed has been called out of town on urgent business. If the prisoner has no objection, and if you, sir,"— looking straight at the would-be attorney,— "have heard all the testimony so far offered, the Court sees no objection to your acting in his place."

The deputy on the right side of the prisoner leaned over, whispered something to Tilden, who stared at the Judge and shook his head. It was evident that Bud had no objection to this nor to anything else, for that matter. Of all the men in the room he seemed the least interested.

I turned in my seat and touched the arm of my neighbor.

"Who is that man who wants to go on with the case?"

"Oh, that's Bill Cartwright, one of the cheap shyster lawyers always hanging around here looking for a job. His boast is he never lost a suit. Guess the other fellow skipped because he thought he had a better scoop somewhere else. These poor devils from the mountains never have any money to pay a lawyer. Court appoints 'em."

With the appointment of the prisoner's attorney the crowd in the court-room craned their necks in closer attention, one man standing on his chair for a better view until a deputy ordered him down. They knew what the charge was. It was the defence they all wanted to hear. That had been the topic of conversation around the tavern stoves of Bug Hollow for months past.

Cartwright began by asking that the mail-carrier be recalled. The little man again took the stand.

The methods of these police-court lawyers always interest me. They are gamblers in evidence, most of them. They take their chances as the cases go on; some of them know the

jury — one or two is enough; some are learned in the law — more learned, often, than the prosecutor, who is a government appointee with political backers; and now and then one of them knows the Judge, who is also a political appointee and occasionally has his party to care for. All are valuable in an election, and a few of them are honest. This one, my neighbor told me, had held office as a police justice and was a leader in his district.

Cartwright drew his gloves carefully from his hands, laid his silk hat on a chair, dropped into it a package of legal papers tied with a red string, and, adjusting his glasses, fixed his eyes on the mail-carrier. The expression on his face was bland and seductive.

"At what hour do you say the attempted robbery took place, Mr. Bowditch?"

"About eleven o'clock."

"Did you have a watch?"

"No."

"How do you know, then?" The question was asked in a mild way, as if he intended to help the carrier's memory.

"I don't know exactly; it may have been half-past ten or eleven."

"You of course saw the man's face?"

"No."

"Then you heard him speak?" Same tone, as if trying his best to encourage the witness in his statements.

"No." This was said with some positiveness. The mail-carrier evidently intended to tell the truth.

Cartwright turned quickly with a snarl like that of a dog suddenly goaded into a fight.

"How can you swear, then, that the prisoner made the assault?"

The little man changed color and stammered out in excuse: —

"He was as big as him, anyway, and there ain't no other like him nowhere in them parts."

"Oh, he was as *big* as him, was he?" This retort came with undisguised contempt. "And there are no others like him, eh? Do you know *everybody* in Bell County, Mr. Bowditch?"

The mail-carrier did not answer.

Cartwright waited until the discomfiture of the witness could be felt by the jury, dismissed him with a wave of his hand, and, looking over the room, beckoned to an old man seated by a girl, — the same couple he had been talking to before his appointment by the Court,—and said in a loud voice: —

"Will Mr. Perkins Tilden take the stand?"

At the mention of his father's name, Bud, who had maintained throughout his indifferent attitude, straightened himself erect in his chair with so quick a movement that the deputy edged a foot nearer and instinctively slid his hand to his hip-pocket.

A lean, cadaverous, painfully thin old man in answer to his name rose to his feet and edged his way through the crowd to the witness-chair. He was an inch taller than his son, though only half his weight, and was dressed in a suit of cheap cloth of the fashion of long ago, the coat too small for him, even for his shrunken shoulders, and the sleeves reaching only to his wrists. As he took his seat, drawing in his long legs toward his chair, his knee-bones, under the strain, seemed to be on the point of coming through his trousers. His shoulders were bowed, the incurve of his thin stomach following the line of his back. As he settled back in his chair he passed his hand nervously over his mouth, as if his lips were dry.

Cartwright's manner to this witness was the manner of a lackey who hangs on every syllable that falls from his master's lips.

"At what time, Mr. Tilden, did your son Bud reach your house on the night of the robbery?"

The old man cleared his throat and said, as if weighing each word, —

"At ten minutes past ten o'clock."

"How do you fix the time?"

"I had just wound the clock when Bud come in."

"Now, Mr. Tilden, how far is it to the cross-roads where the mail-carrier says he was robbed?"

"About a mile and a half from my place."

"And how long would it take an able-bodied man to walk it?"

"'Bout fifteen minutes."

"Not more?"

"No, sir."

The government's attorney had no questions to ask, and said so with a certain assumed nonchalance.

Cartwright bowed smilingly, dismissed Bud's father with a satisfied gesture of the hand, looked over the court-room with the air of a man who was unable at the moment to find what he wanted, and in a low voice called: "Jennetta Moore!"

The girl, who sat within three feet of Cartwright, having followed the old man almost to the witness-stand, rose timidly, drew her shawl closer about her shoulders, and took the seat

vacated by Bud's father. She had that half-fed look in her face which one sometimes finds in the women of the mountain districts. She was frightened and very pale. As she pushed her poke-bonnet back from her ears her unkempt brown hair fell about her neck.

Bud Tilden, at mention of her name, half started from his chair and would have risen to his feet had not the officer laid his hand upon him. He seemed on the point of making some protest which the action of the officer alone restrained.

Cartwright, after the oath had been administered, began in a voice so low that the jury stretched their necks to listen: —

"Miss Moore, do you know the prisoner?"

"Yes, sir, I know Bud." She had one end of the shawl between her fingers and was twisting it aimlessly. Every eye in the room was fastened upon her.

"How long have you known him?"

There was a pause, and then she said in a faint voice, —

"Ever since he and me growed up."

"Ever since you and he grew up, eh?" This repetition was in a loud voice, so that any juryman dull of hearing might catch it. "Was he at your house on the night of the robbery?"

"Yes, sir."

"At what time?"

"'Bout ten o'clock." This was again repeated.

"How long did he stay?"

"Not more 'n ten minutes."

"Where did he go then?"

"He said he was goin' home."

"How far is it to his home from your house?"

"'Bout ten minutes' walk."

"That will do, Miss Moore," said Cartwright, and took his seat.

The government prosecutor, who had sat with shoulders hunched up, his wings pulled in, rose to his feet with the aid of a chair-back, stretched his long arms above his head, and then, lowering one hand level with the girl's face, said, as he thrust one sharp, skinny finger toward her: —

"Did anybody else come to see you the next night after the robbery?"

There was a pause, during which Cartwright busied himself with his papers. One of his methods was never to seem interested in the cross-examination of any one of his witnesses.

The girl's face flushed, and she began to fumble the shawl nervously with her fingers.

"Yes, Hank Halliday," she murmured in a low voice.

"Mr. Halliday, who has testified here?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did he want?"

"He wanted to know if I 'd got a letter he 'd writ me day before. And I tol' him I had n't. Then he 'lowed he 'd a-brought it to me himself if he 'd knowed Bud was goin' to turn thief and hold up the mail-man. I had n't heard nothin' 'bout it and nobody else had till he began to talk. I opened the door then and tol' him to walk out; that I would n't hear nobody speak that way 'bout Bud Tilden. That was 'fore they 'd 'rested Bud."

"Have you got that letter now?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever get it?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever see it?"

"No, and I don't think it was ever writ."

"But he *has* written you letters before?"

"He used to; he don't now."

"That will do."

The girl took her place again behind the old man.

Cartwright rose to his feet with great dignity, walked to the chair on which rested his hat,

took from it the package of papers to serve as an orator's roll, — he did not open it, and they evidently had no bearing on the case, — and addressed the Judge, the package held aloft in his hand: —

"Your Honor, there 's not been a particle of evidence so far produced in this court to convict this man of this crime. I have not conferred with him, and therefore do not know what answers he has to make to this infamous charge. I am convinced, however, that his own statement under oath will clear up at once any doubt remaining in the minds of this honorable jury of his innocence."

This was said with a certain ill-concealed triumph in his voice. I saw now why he had taken the case, and saw, too, the drift of his defence — everything thus far pointed to the old hackneyed plea of an alibi. He had evidently determined on this course of action when he sat listening to the stories Bud's father and the girl had told him as he sat beside them on the bench near the door. Their testimony, taken in connection with the uncertain testimony of the government's principal witness, the mail-carrier, as to the exact time of the assault, together with the prisoner's testimony stoutly denying the crime, would insure either

an acquittal or a disagreement. The first would result in his fees being paid by the court, the second would add to this amount whatever Bud's friends could scrape together to induce him to go on with the second trial. In either case his masterly defence was good for an additional number of clients and perhaps — of votes. It is humiliating to think that any successor of Choate, Webster, or Evarts should earn his bread in this way, but it is true all the same.

"The prisoner will take the stand!" cried Cartwright in a firm voice.

As the words left his mouth, the noise of shuffling feet and the shifting of positions for a better view of the prisoner became so loud that the Judge rapped for order, the clerk repeating it with the end of his ruler.

Bud lifted himself to his feet slowly (his being called was evidently as much of a surprise to him as it was to the crowded room), looked about him carelessly, his glance resting first on the girl's face and then on the deputy beside him. He stepped clumsily down from the raised platform and shouldered his way to the witness chair. The prosecuting attorney had evidently been amazed at the flank movement of his opponent, for he moved his position

so he could look squarely in Bud's face. As the prisoner sank into his seat, the room became hushed in silence.

Bud kissed the book mechanically, hooked his feet together, and, clasping his big hands across his waist-line, settled his great body between the arms of the chair, with his chin resting on his shirt-front. Cartwright, in his most impressive manner, stepped a foot closer to Bud's chair.

"Mr. Tilden, you have heard the testimony of the mail-carrier; now be good enough to tell the jury where you were on the night of the robbery — how many miles from this *mail-sack?*" and he waved his hand contemptuously toward the bag. It was probably the first time in all his life that Bud had heard any man dignify his personality with any such title.

In recognition of the compliment, Bud raised his chin slightly and fixed his eyes more intently on his questioner. Up to this time he had not taken the slightest notice of him.

"'Bout as close's I could git to it — 'bout three feet, I should say — maybe less."

Cartwright gave a slight start and bit his lip. Evidently the prisoner had misunderstood him. The silence continued.

"I don't mean *here*, Mr. Tilden;" and he

pointed to the bag. "I mean the night of the so-called robbery."

"That 's what I said; 'bout as close 's I could git."

"Well, did you rob the mail?" This was asked uneasily, but with a half-concealed laugh in his voice as if the joke would appear in a minute.

"No."

"No, of course not." The tone of relief was apparent.

"Well, do you know anything about the cutting of the bag?"

"Yes."

"Who did it?"

"Me."

"*You?*" The surprise was now an angry one.

"Yes, me."

At this unexpected reply the Judge pushed his glasses high up on his forehead with a quick motion and leaned over his bench, his eyes on the prisoner. The jury looked at each other with amazement; such scenes were rare in their experience. The prosecuting attorney smiled grimly. Cartwright looked as if some one had struck him a sudden blow in the face.

"What for?" he stammered. It was evi-

dently the only question left for him to ask. All his self-control was gone now, his face livid, an angry look in his eyes. That any man with state's prison yawning before him could make such a fool of himself seemed to astound him.

Bud turned slowly and, pointing his finger at Halliday, said between his closed teeth: —

"Ask Hank Halliday; he knows."

The buzzard sprang to his feet. There was the scent of carrion in the air now; I saw it in his eyes.

"We don't want to ask Mr. Halliday; we want to ask you. Mr. Halliday is not on trial, and we want the truth if you can tell it."

The irregularity of the proceeding was unnoticed in the tense excitement.

Bud looked at him as a big mastiff looks at a snarling cur with a look more of pity than contempt. Then he said slowly, accentuating each word: —

"Keep yer shirt on. You 'll git the truth — git the whole of it. Git what you ain't lookin' for. There ain't no liars up in our mountains 'cept them skunks in gov'ment pay you fellers send up to us, and things like Hank Halliday. He 's wuss nor any skunk. A skunk is a varmint that don't stink tell ye meddle with him, but Hank Halliday stinks all the time. He 's

one o' them fellers that goes 'round with books in their pockets with picters in 'em that no girl oughter see and no white man oughter read. He gits 'em down to Louisville. There ain't a man in Pondville won't tell ye it 's true. He shoved one in my outside pocket over to Pondville when I warn't lookin', the day 'fore I held up this man Bowditch, and went and told the fellers 'round the tavern that I had it. They come and pulled it out and had the laugh on me, and then he began to talk and said he'd write to Jennetta and send her one o' the picters by mail and tell her he 'd got it out o' my coat, and he did. Sam Kellers seen Halliday with the letter and told me after Bowditch had got it in his bag. I laid for Bowditch at Pondville Corners, but he got past somehow, and I struck in behind Bill Somers's mill, and crossed the mountain and caught up with him as he was ridin' through the piece o' woods near the clearin'. I did n't know but he 'd try to shoot, and I did n't want to hurt him, so I crep' up behind and threw him in the bushes, cut a hole in the bag, and got the letter. That 's the only one I wanted and that 's the only one I took. I did n't rob no mail, but I warn't goin' to hev an honest, decent girl like Jennetta git that letter, and there warn't no other way."

The stillness that followed was broken only by the Judge's voice.

"What became of that letter?"

"I got it. Want to see it?"

"Yes."

Bud felt in his pockets as if looking for something, and then, with an expression as if he had suddenly remembered, remarked: —

"No, I ain't got none. They stole my knife when they 'rested me." Then facing the court-room, he added: "Somebody lend me a knife, and pass me my hat over there 'longside them sheriffs."

The court-crier took the hat from one of the deputies, and the clerk, in answer to a nod of assent from the Judge, passed Bud an ink-eraser with a steel blade in one end.

The audience now had the appearance of one watching a juggler perform a trick. Bud grasped the hat in one hand, turned back the brim, inserted the point of the knife between the hat lining and the hat itself, and drew out a yellow envelope stained with dirt and perspiration.

"Here it is. I ain't opened it, and what 's more, they did n't find it when they searched me;" and he looked again toward the deputies.

The Judge leaned forward in his seat and said, —

"Hand me the letter."

The letter was passed up by the court-crier, every eye following it. His Honor examined the envelope, and, beckoning to Halliday, said:

"Is this your letter?"

Halliday stepped to the side of the Judge, fingered the letter closely, and said, "Looks like my writin'."

"Open it and see."

Halliday broke the seal with his thumb-nail, and took out half a sheet of note-paper closely written on one side, wrapped about a small picture card.

"Yes, it's my letter;" and he glanced sheepishly around the room and hung his head, his face scarlet.

The Judge leaned back in his chair, raised his hand impressively, and said gravely, —

"This case is adjourned until ten o'clock to-morrow."

Two days later I again met the Warden as he was entering the main door of the jail. He had been over to the court-house, he said, helping the deputy along with a new "batch of moonshiners."

"What became of Bud Tilden?" I asked.

"Oh, he got it in the neck for robbin' the mails, just 's I told you he would. Peached on himself like a d——d fool and give everything dead away. He left for Kansas this morning. Judge give him twenty years."

He is still in the lock-step at Leavenworth Prison. He has kept it up now for two years. His hair is short, his figure bent, his step sluggish. The law is slowly making an animal of him — that wise, righteous law which is no respecter of persons.

III

"ELEVEN MONTHS AND TEN DAYS"

It was a feeble old man of seventy-two this time who sat facing the jury, an old man with bent back, scant gray hair, and wistful, pleading eyes.

He had been arrested in the mountains of Kentucky and had been brought to Covington for trial, chained to another outlaw, one of those "moonshiners" who rob the great distilleries of part of their profits and the richest and most

humane government on earth of part of its revenue.

For eleven months and ten days he had been penned up in one of the steel cages of Covington jail.

I recognized him the moment I saw him.

He was the old fellow who spoke to me from between the bars of his den on my visit the week before to the inferno, — the day I found Samanthy North and her baby, — and who told me then he was charged with "sellin'," and that he "reckoned" he was the oldest of all the prisoners about him. He had on the same suit of coarse, homespun clothes — the trousers hiked up toward one shoulder from the strain of a single suspender; the waistcoat held by one button; the shirt open at the neck, showing the wrinkled throat — wrinkled as an old saddle-bag — and brown, hairy chest.

He still carried his big slouch hat, dust-begrimed and frayed at the edges. It hung over one knee now, a red cotton handkerchief tucked under its brim. He was superstitious about it, no doubt; he would wear it when he walked out a free man, and wanted it always within reach. Hooked in its band was a trout-fly, a red ibis, some souvenir, perhaps, of the cool woods that he loved, and which brought back

to him the clearer the happy, careless days which might never be his again.

The trout-fly settled all doubts in my mind as to his origin and his identity. He was not a "moonshiner;" he was my old trout fisherman, Jonathan Gordon, come back to life, even to his streaming, unkempt beard, leathery skin, thin, peaked nose, and deep, searching eyes. That the daisies which Jonathan loved were at that very moment blooming over his grave up in his New Hampshire hills, and had been for years back, made no difference to me. I could not be mistaken. The feeble old man sitting within ten feet of me, fidgeting about in his chair, the glare of the big windows flooding his face with light, his long legs tucked under him, his bony hands clasped together, the scanty gray hair adrift over his forehead, his slouch hat hooked over his knee, was my own Jonathan come back to life. His dog, George, too, was somewhere within reach, and so were his fishing-pole and creel, with its leather shoulder band polished like a razor-strop. You who read this never saw Jonathan, perhaps, but you can easily carry his picture in your mind by remembering some one of the other old fellows you used to see on Sunday mornings hitching their horses to the fence outside of the country church,

or sauntering through the woods with a fish-pole over their shoulders and a creel by their sides, or with their heads together on the porch of some cross-roads store, bartering eggs and butter for cotton cloth and brown sugar. All these simple-minded, open-aired, out-of-doors old fellows, with the bark on them, are very much alike.

The only difference between the two men lay in the expression of the two faces. Jonathan always looked straight at you when he talked, so that you could fathom his eyes as you would fathom a deep pool that mirrored the stars. This old man's eyes wavered from one to another, lighting first on the jury, then on the buzzard of a district attorney, and then on the Judge, with whom rested the freedom which meant life or which meant imprisonment: at his age — death. This wavering look was the look of a dog who had been an outcast for weeks, or who had been shut up with a chain about his throat; one who had received only kicks and cuffs for pats of tenderness — a cringing, pleading look ready to crouch beneath some fresh cruelty.

This look, as the trial went on and the buzzard of an attorney flapped out his denunciations, deepened to an expression of abject fear. In trying to answer the questions hurled at him,

he would stroke his parched throat mechanically with his long fingers as if to help the syllables free themselves. In listening to the witnesses he would curve his body forward, one skinny hand cupped behind his ear, his jaw dropping slowly, revealing the white line of the lips above the straggling beard. Now and then as he searched the eyes of the jury there would flash out from his own the same baffled, anxious look that comes into dear old Joe Jefferson's face when he stops halfway up the mountain and peers anxiously into the eyes of the gnomes who have stolen out of the darkness and are grouping themselves silently about him—a look expressing one moment his desire to please and the next his anxiety to escape.

There was no doubt about the old man's crime, not the slightest. It had been only the tweedledum and tweedledee of the law that had saved him the first time. They would not serve him now. The evidence was too conclusive, the facts too plain. The "deadwood," as such evidence is called by the initiated, lay in heaps—more than enough to send him to state prison for the balance of his natural life. The buzzard of a district attorney who had first scented out his body with an indictment, and who all these eleven months and ten days had sat with folded

wings and hunched-up shoulders, waiting for his final meal, — I had begun to dislike him in the Bud Tilden trial, but I hated him now (a foolish, illogical prejudice, for he was only doing his duty as he saw it),— had full control of all the "deadwood;" had it with him, in fact. There were not only some teaspoonfuls of the identical whiskey which this law-breaker had sold, all in an eight-ounce vial properly corked and labelled, but there was also the identical silver dime which had been paid for it. One of the jury was smelling this whiskey when I entered the court-room; another was fingering the dime. It was a good dime, and bore the stamp of the best and greatest nation on the earth. On one side was the head of the Goddess of Liberty and on the other was the wreath of plenty: some stalks of corn and the bursting heads of wheat, with one or two ivy leaves twisted together, suggesting honor and glory and achievement. The "deadwood" — the evidence — was all right. All that remained was for the buzzard to flap his wings once or twice in a speech; then the jury would hold a short consultation, a few words would follow from the presiding Judge, and the carcass would be ready for the official undertaker, the prison Warden.

How wonderful the system, how mighty the results!

One is often filled with admiration and astonishment at the perfect working of this mighty engine, the law. Properly adjusted, it rests on the bed-plate of equal rights to all men; is set in motion by the hot breath of the people — superheated often by popular clamor; is kept safe by the valve of a grand jury; is governed in its speed by the wise and prudent judge, and regulated in its output by a jury of twelve men.

Sometimes in the application of its force this machine, being man-made, like all machines, and thus without a soul, gets out of order, loosens a cog or bolt perhaps, throwing the mechanism "out of gear," as it is called. When this happens, the engine resting on its bed-plate still keeps its foundation, but some lesser part, the loom or lathe or driving-wheel, which is another way of saying the arrest, the trial, or the conviction, goes awry. Sometimes the power-belt is purposely thrown off, the machinery stopped, and a consultation takes place, resulting in a disagreement or a new trial. When the machine is started again, it is started more carefully, with the first experience remembered. Sometimes the rightful material — the criminal, or the material from which the criminal is made — to feed

this loom or lathe or driving-wheel is replaced by some unsuitable material like the girl whose hair became entangled in a flying-belt and whose body was snatched up and whirled mercilessly about. Only then is the engine working on its bed-plate brought to a standstill. The steam of the boiler, the breath of the people, keeps up, but it is withheld from the engine until the mistake can be rectified and the girl rescued. The law of mercy, the divine law, now asserts itself. This law, being the law of God, is higher than the law of man. Some of those who believe in the man-law and who stand over the mangled body of the victim, or who sit beside her bed, bringing her slowly back to life, affirm that the girl was careless and deserved her fate. Others, who believe in the God-law, maintain that the engine is run not to kill but to protect, not to maim but to educate, and that the fault lies in the wrong application of the force, not in the force itself.

So it was with this old man. Eleven months and ten days before this day of his second trial (eleven months and three days when I first saw him), a flying-belt set in motion up in his own mountain home had caught and crushed him. To-day he was still in the maw of the machinery, his courage gone, his spirit broken, his

heart torn. The group about his body, not being a sympathetic group, were insisting that the engine could do no wrong; that the victim was not a victim at all, but lawful material to be ground up. This theory was sustained by the District Attorney. Every day he must have fresh materials. The engine must run. The machinery must be fed.

And his record?

Ah, how often is this so in the law! — his record must be kept good.

After the whiskey had been held up to the light and the dime fingered, the old man's attorney — a young lawyer from the old man's own town, a smooth-faced young fellow who had the gentle look of a hospital nurse and who was doing his best to bring the broken body back to life and freedom — put the victim on the stand.

"Tell the jury exactly how it all happened," he said, "and in your own way, just as you told it to me."

"I 'll try, sir; I 'll do my best." It was Rip's voice, only fainter. He tugged at his collar as if to breathe the easier, cleared his throat, and began again. "I ain't never been in a place like this but once before, and I hope you 'll forgive

me if I make any mistakes," and he looked about the room, a flickering, half-burnt-out smile trembling on his lips.

"Well, I got a piece of land 'bout two miles back of my place that belongs to my wife, and I ain't never fenced it in, for I ain't never had no time somehow to cut the timber to do it, she 's been so sickly lately. 'Bout a year ago I was goin' 'long toward Hi Stephens's mill a-lookin' for muskrats when I heard some feller's axe a-workin' away, and I says to Hi, 'Hi, ain't that choppin' goin' on on the wife's land?" and he said it was, and that Luke Shanders and his boys had been drawin' out cross-ties for the new railroad; thought I knowed it.

"Well, I kep' 'long up and come on Luke jes 's he was throwin' the las' stick onto his wagon. He kinder started when he see me, jumped on, and begin to drive off. I says to him, 'Luke,' I says, 'I ain't got no objection to you havin' a load of wood; there 's plenty of it; but it don't seem right for you to take it 'thout askin', 'specially since the wife 's kind o' peaked and it 's her land and not yourn.' He hauled the team back on their hind legs, and he says:—

"'When I see fit to ask you or your old woman's leave to cut timber on my own land,

I will. Me and Lawyer Fillmore has been a-lookin' into them deeds, and this timber is mine;' and he driv off.

"I come along home and studied 'bout it a bit, and me and the wife talked it over. We did n't want to make no fuss, but we knowed he was a-lyin', but that ain't no unusual thing for Luke Shanders.

"Well, the nex' mornin' I got into Pondville 'bout eight o'clock and set a-waitin' till Lawyer Fillmore come in. He looked kind o' shamefaced when he see me, and I says, 'What 's this Luke Shanders 's been a-tellin' me 'bout your sayin' my wife's timberland is his'n?"

"Then he began 'splainin' that the 'riginal lines was drawed wrong and that old man Shanders's land, Luke's father, run to the brook and took in all the white oak on the wife's lot and" —

The buzzard sprang to his feet and shrieked out: —

"Your Honor, I object to this rigmarole. Tell the jury right away" — and he faced the prisoner — "what you know about this glass of whiskey. Get right down to the facts; we 're not cutting cross-ties in this court."

The old man caught his breath, placed his fingers suddenly to his lips as if to choke back

the forbidden words, and, in an apologetic voice, murmured, —

"I 'm gettin' there 's fast 's I kin, sir, 'deed I am; I ain't hidin' nothin'."

He was n't. Any one could see it in his face.

"Better let him go on in his own way," remarked the Judge indifferently. His Honor was looking over some papers, and the monotonous tones of the witness diverted attention. Most of the jury, too, had already lost interest in the story. One of the younger members had settled himself in his chair, thrust his hands into his pockets, stretched out his legs, and had shut his eyes as if to take a nap. Nothing so far had implicated either the whiskey or the dime; when it did he would wake up.

The old man turned a grateful glance toward the Judge, leaned forward in his chair, and with bent head looked about him on the floor as if trying to pick up the lost end of his story. The young attorney, in an encouraging tone, helped him find it with a question: —

"When did you next see Mr. Fillmore and Luke Shanders?"

"When the trial come off," answered the old man, raising his head again. "Course we could n't lose the land. 'T warn't worth much till the new railroad come through; then the oak come

handy for cross-ties. That 's what set Fillmore and Luke Shanders onto it.

"When the case was tried, the Judge seed they could n't bring no 'riginal deed 'cept one showin' that Luke Shanders and Fillmore was partners in the steal, and the Judge 'lowed they 'd have to pay for the timber they cut and hauled away.

"They went round then a-sayin' they 'd get even, though wife and I 'lowed we 'd take anything reasonable for what hurt they done us. And that went on till one day 'bout a year ago Luke come into my place and said he and Lawyer Fillmore would be over the next day; that they was tired o' fightin', and that if I was willin' to settle they was.

"One o' the new gov'ment dep'ties was sittin' in my room at the time. He was goin' 'long up to town-court, he said, and had jest drapped in to pass the time o' day. There he is sittin' over there," and he pointed to his captor.

"I had n't never seen him before, though I know a good many of 'em, but he showed me his badge, and I knowed who he was.

"The nex' mornin' Lawyer Fillmore and Luke stopped outside and hollered for me to come out. I wanted 'em to come in. Wife had baked some biscuit and we was determined to

be sociable-like, now that they was willin' to do what was fair, and I 'lowed they must drive up and git out. They said that that 's what they come for, only that they had to go a piece down the road, and they 'd be back agin in a half hour with the money.

"Then Luke Shanders 'lowed he was cold, and asked if I had a drap o' whiskey."

At mention of the all-important word a visible stir took place in the court-room. The young man with the closed eyes opened them and sat up in his chair. The jury ceased whispering to one another; the Judge pushed his spectacles back on his forehead and moved his papers aside; the buzzard stretched his long neck an inch farther out of his shirt-collar and lowered his head in attention. The spigot, which up to this time had run only "emptyings," was now giving out the clear juice of the wine-vat. Each man bent his tin cup of an ear to catch it. The old man noticed the movement and looked about him anxiously, as if dreading another rebuff. He started to speak, cleared his throat, pulled nervously at his beard for a moment, glancing furtively about the room, and in a lower tone repeated the words: —

"Asked if I had a drap o' whiskey. Well, I always take a dram when I want it, and I had

some prime stuff my son Ned had sent me over from Frankfort, so I went back and poured out 'bout four fingers in a glass, and took it out to him.

"After he drunk it he handed me back the glass and driv off, sayin' he 'd be round later. I took the glass into the house agin and sot it 'longside the bottle on the mantel, and when I turned round there sot the gov'ment dep'ty. He 'd come in, wife said, while I was talkin' with Luke in the road. When he see the glass he asked if I had a license, and I told him I did n't sell no liquor, and he asked me what that was, and I told him it was whiskey, and then he got the bottle and took a smell of it, and then he held up the glass and turned it upside down, and out drapped a ten-cent piece. Then he 'rested me!"

The jury was all attention now; the several exhibits were coming into view. One fat, red-faced juror, who had a dyed mustache and looked like a sporting man, would have laughed outright had not the Judge checked him with a stern look.

"You did n't put the dime there, did you?" the young attorney asked, in a tone that implied a negative answer.

"No, sir; I don't take no money for what I

give a man." This came with a slight touch of indignation.

"Do you know who put it there?"

"Well, there warn't nobody but Luke Shanders could 'a' done it, 'cause nobody had the glass but him. I heard since that it was all a put-up job, that they had swore I kep' a road-side, and they had sot the dep'ty onto me; but I don't like to think men kin be so mean, and I ain't a-sayin' it now. If they knew what I've suffered for what they done to me, they could n't help but feel sorry for me if they 're human."

He stopped and passed his hands wearily over his forehead. The jury sat still, their eyes riveted on the speaker. Even the red-faced man was listening now.

For an instant there was a pause. Then the old man reached forward in his seat, his elbows on his knees, his hands held out as if in appeal, and in a low, pleading tone addressed the jury. Strange to say, neither the buzzard nor the Judge interrupted the unusual proceeding: —

"Men, I hope you will let me go home now; won't you, please? I ain't never been 'customed all my life to bein' shut up, and it comes purty hard, not bein' so young as I was. I ain't findin' no fault, but it don't seem to me I ever

done anythin' to deserve all that 's come to me lately. I got 'long best way I could over there" — and he pointed in the direction of the steel cages — "till las' week, when Sam Jelliff come down to see his boy and told me the wife was took sick bad, worse than she 's been yet. She ain't used to bein' alone; you 'd know that if you could see her. The neighbors is purty good to her, I hear, but nobody don't understand her like me, she and me bein' so long together — mos' fifty years now. You 'll let me go home, won't you, men? I git so tired, so tired; please let me go."

The buzzard was on his feet now, his arms sawing the air, his strident voice filling the court-room.

He pleaded for the machine — for the safety of the community, for the majesty of the law. He demanded instant conviction for this trickster, this Fagin among men, this hoary-headed old scoundrel who had insulted the intelligence of twelve of the most upright men he had ever seen in a jury-box, insulted them with a tale that even a child would laugh at. When at last he folded his wings, hunched up his shoulders, and sat down, and the echoes of his harsh voice had died away, it seemed to me that I could hear vibrating through the room, as one

hears the murmur of a brook after a storm, the tender tones of the old man pleading as if for his life.

The jury had listened to the buzzard's harangue with their eyes, not with their ears. Down in their hearts there still rang the piteous words. The man-made machine was breaking down; its mechanism out of "gear;" the law that governed it defective. The God-law, the law of mercy, was being set in motion.

The voice of the Judge trembled a little as he delivered his charge, as if somehow a stray tear had clogged the passage from his heart to his lips. In low, earnest tones that every man strained his ear to catch, he reviewed the testimony of the witnesses, those I had not heard; took up the uncontradicted statement of the Deputy Marshal as evidenced by the exhibits before them; passed to the motive behind the alleged conspiracy; dwelt for a moment on the age and long confinement of the accused, and ended with the remark that if they believed his story to be an explanation of the facts, they must acquit him.

They never left their seats. Even the red-faced man voted out of turn in his eagerness. The God-law had triumphed! The old man was free.

The throng in the court-room rose and made their way to the doors, the old man going first, escorted by an officer to see him safely outside. The Judge disappeared through a door; the clerk lifted the lid of his desk and stowed beneath it the greasy, ragged Bible, stained with the lies of a thousand lips. The buzzard crammed his hat over his eyes, turned, and without a word to any one stalked out of the room.

I mingled with the motley throng, my ears alert for any spoken opinions. I had seen the flying-belt thrown from the machine and the stoppage of the engine. I wanted now to learn something of the hot breath of the people who had set it in motion eleven months and ten days before.

"Reckon he'll cut a blue streak for home now," muttered a court lounger, buttoning up his coat; "that is, if he's got one. You'll never catch him sellin' any more moonshine."

"Been me, I'd soaked him," blurted out a corner loafer. "If you can't convict one of these clay-eaters when you 've got him dead to rights, ain't no use havin' no justice."

"I thought Tom [the buzzard] would land him," said a stout, gray-whiskered lawyer who was gathering up his papers. "First case

Tom 's lost this week. Goes pretty hard with him, you know, when he loses a case."

"It would have been an outrage, sir, if he had won it," broke in a stranger. "The arrest of an old man like that on such a charge, and his confinement for nearly a year in a hole like that one across the street, is a disgrace. Something is rotten in the way the laws are administered in the mountains of Kentucky, or outrages like this could n't occur."

"He would n't thank you, sir, for interfering," remarked a bystander. "Being shut up is n't to him what it is to you and me. He 's been taken care of for a year, has n't he? Warmed and fed, and got his three meals a day. That 's a blamed sight more than he gets at home. They 're only half human, these mountaineers, anyway. Don't worry; he 's all right."

"You 've struck it first time," retorted the Deputy Marshal, who had smelled the whiskey, found the dime, and slipped the handcuffs on the old man's withered wrists. "Go slow, will you?" and he faced the stranger. "We got to do our duty, ain't we? That 's the law, and there ain't no way gittin' 'round it. And if we make mistakes, what of it? We 've got to make mistakes sometimes, or we would n't

catch half of 'em. The old skeesiks ought to be glad to git free. See?"

Suddenly there came to my mind the realization of the days that were to follow and all that they would bring to him of shame. I thought of the cold glance of his neighbors, the frightened stare of the children ready to run at the approach of the old jail-bird, the coarse familiarity of the tavern lounger. Then the cruelty of it all rose before me. Who would recompense him for the indignities he had suffered — the deadly chill of the steel clamps; the long days of suspense; the bitterness of the first disagreement; the foul air of the inferno, made doubly foul by close crowding of filthy bodies, inexpressibly horrible to one who had breathed all his life the cool, pure air of the open with only the big clean trees for his comrades?

And if at last his neighbors should take pity upon him and drive out the men who had wrecked his old age, and he should wander once more up the brook with his rod over his shoulder, the faithful dog at his heels, and a line of the old song still alive in his heart, what about those eleven months and ten days of which the man-law had robbed him?

O mighty machine! O benign, munificent

law! Law of a people who boast of mercy and truth and equal rights and justice to all. Law of a land with rivers of gold and mountains of silver, the sum of its wealth astounding the world.

What 's to be done about it?

Nothing.

Better drag a dozen helpless Samanthy Norths from their homes, their suckling babes in their arms, and any number of gray-haired old men from their cabins, than waive one jot or tittle of so just a code; and lose — the tax on whiskey.

CAP'N BOB OF THE SCREAMER

CAPTAIN Bob Brandt dropped in to-day, looking brown and ruddy, and filling my office with a breeze and freshness that seemed to have followed him all the way in from the sea.

"Just in, Captain?" I cried, springing to my feet, my fingers closing round his — no more welcome visitor than Captain Bob ever pushes open my office door.

"Yes — Teutonic."

"Where did you pick her up — Fire Island?"

"No; 'bout hundred miles off Montauk."

Captain Bob has been a Sandy Hook pilot for some years back.

"How was the weather?" I had a chair ready for him now and was lifting the lid of my desk in search of a box of cigars.

"Pretty dirty. Nasty swell on, and so thick you could hack holes in it. Come pretty nigh missin' her," — and the Captain opened his big storm-coat, hooked his cloth cap with its ear-tabs on one prong of the back of one office

chair, stretched his length in another, and, bending forward, reached out his long brawny arm for the cigar I was extending toward him.

I have described this sea-dog before — as a younger sea-dog — twenty years younger, in fact. He was in my employ then — he and his sloop Screamer. Every big foundation stone that Caleb set in Shark Ledge Light — the one off Keyport Harbor — can tell you about them both.

In those lighthouse days this Captain Bob was "a tall, straight, blue-eyed young fellow of twenty-two, with a face like an open book — one of those perfectly simple, absolutely fearless, alert men found so often on the New England coast, with legs and arms of steel, body of hickory, and hands of whalebone; cabin boy at twelve, common sailor at sixteen, first mate at twenty, and full captain the year he voted."

He is precisely the same kind of man to-day, plus twenty years of experience. The figure is still the figure of his youth, the hickory a little better seasoned, perhaps, and the steel and whalebone a little harder, but they have lost none of their spring and vitality. The ratio of promotion has also been kept up. That he should now rank as the most expert pilot on the station was quite to be expected. He could have

filled as well a commander's place on the bridge, had he chosen to work along those lines.

And the modesty of the man!

Nothing that he has done, or can still do, has ever stretched his hat measure or swelled any part of his thinking apparatus. The old pilot-cap is still number seven, and the sensible head beneath it number seven, too. It could be number eight, or nine, or even ten, if it had expanded in proportion to the heroic quality of many of his deeds. During the lighthouse days, for instance, when some sudden shift of wind would churn the long rollers into bobbles and then into frenzied seas that smothered the Ledge in white suds, if a lifeboat was to be launched in the boiling surf, the last man to jump aboard, after a mighty push with his long hindmost leg, was sure to be this same bundle of whalebone and hickory. And should this boat, a few minutes later, go whirling along in the "Race," bottom side up, with every worker safe astride her keel, principally because of Captain Bob's coolness and skill in hauling them out of the water, again the last man to crawl beside the rescued crew would be this same long-legged, long-armed skipper.

Or should a guy-rope snap with a sound like a pistol-shot, and a great stone swung to a boom

and weighing tons should begin running amuck through piles of cement, machinery, and men, and some one of the working gang, seeing the danger, should, with the quickness and sureness of a mountain-goat, spring straight for the stone, clutching the end of the guy and bounding off again, twisting the bight round some improvised snubbing-post, thus checking its mad career, you would not have had to ask his name twice.

"Cap'n Bob stopped it, sir," was sure to have been the proffered reply.

So, too, in his present occupation of pilot. It was only a few years ago that I stood on the deck of an incoming steamer, straining my eyes across a heaving sea, the horizon lost in the dull haze of countless froth-caps; we had slowed for a pilot, so the word came down the deck. Suddenly, against the murky sky-line, with mainsail double-reefed and jib close-hauled, loomed a light craft plunging bows under at every lurch. Then a chip the size of your hand broke away from the frail vessel, and a big wave lying around for such prey, sprang upon it with wide-open mouth. The tiny bit dodged and slipped out of sight into a mighty ravine, then mounted high in air, upborne in the teeth of another great monster, and again was lost to view.

Soon the chip became a bit of driftwood manned by two toy men working two toy oars like mad and bearing at one end a yellow dot.

Then the first officer walked down the deck to where I stood, followed by a huddle of seamen who began unrolling a rope ladder.

"You 're right," I heard an officer answer a passenger. "It 's no fit weather to take a pilot. Captain would n't have stopped for any other boat but Number 11. But those fellows out there don't know what weather is."

The bit of driftwood now developed into a yawl. The yellow dot broadened and lengthened to the semblance of a man standing erect and unbuttoning his oilskins as he looked straight at the steamer rolling portholes under, the rope ladder flopping against her side. Then came a quick twist of the oars, a sudden lull as the yawl shot within a boat's length of the rope ladder, and with the spring of a cat the man in oilskins landed with both feet on its lower rung, and the next instant he was over the steamer's rail and on her deck beside me.

I thought I knew that spring, even before I saw his face or got hold of his hand.

It was Captain Bob.

As I look at him now, sitting in my office chair, the smoke of the cigar curling about his

bronzed, weather-tanned face, my eye taking in his slim waist, slender thighs, and long, sinewy arms and hands that have served him so well all his life, I can hardly believe that twenty years have passed over his head since we worked together on Shark Ledge. But for the marks chalked on his temples by the Old Man with the Hour-Glass and the few tally-scores of hard work crossing the corners of his mouth and eyes, he has the same external appearance as in the old days. Even these indexes of advancing years are lost when he throws his head up and laughs one of his spontaneous, ringing laughs that fills my office full of sunshine, illumining it for hours after he has gone.

"This pilotin' 's pretty rough sometimes," Captain Bob continued between the puffs of smoke, "but it ain't nothin' to the old days. When I look back on it all, seems to me as if we was out o' our heads most o' the time. I did n't know it then, but 't was true all the same. Think now o' layin' the Screamer broadside on that stone pile at Shark Ledge, unloadin' them stone with nothin' but a couple o' spar buoys to keep 'er off. Wonder I did n't leave 'er bones there. Would if I had n't knowed every stick o' timber in 'er and jest what she could stagger under."

"But she was a good sea-boat," I interpolated. "The Screamer was always the pride of the work."

"None better. You 'd a-thought so if you 'd been with us that night off Hatteras; we layin' to, hatches battened down. I never see it blow wuss. It came out o' the nor'west 'bout dark, and 'fore mornin' I tell ye it was a-humpin' things. We started with a pretty decent set o' sails, new eyelets rove in and new clew-lines, but, Lord love ye, we had n't taken old Hatteras into consideration. Bill Nevins, my engineer, and a landsman who was to work the h'istin' engine, looked kind 'er peaked when what was left of the jib come rattlin' down on his fo'c's'le hatch, but I says to him, 'The Screamer 's all right, Billy, so she don't strike nothin' and so long 's we can keep the water out 'er. Can't sink 'er any more 'n an empty five-gallon ker'sene can with the cork in. We 'll lay 'round here till mornin' and then set a signal. Something 'll come along pretty soon.' Sure 'nough, 'long come a coaler bound for Charleston. She see us a-wallowin' in the trough and our mast thrashin' for all it was worth.

"'What d' ye want?' the skipper says, when he got within hail.

"'Some sail-needles and a ball o' twine,' I hollered back; 'we got everything else.' You should just a-heard him cuss"— and one of Captain Bob's laughs rang through the room. "Them 's two things I 'd forgot — did n't think o' them, in fact, till the mainsheet give 'way.

"Well, he chucked 'em aboard with another cuss. I had n't no money to pay no salvage. All we wanted was them needles and a little elbow-grease and gumption. So we started in, and 'fore night, she still a-thrashin', I 'd fixed up the sails, patched the eyelets with a pair o' boot-legs, and was off again."

"What were you doing off Hatteras, Captain Bob?" I asked. I was leading him on, professing ignorance of minor details, so that I could again enjoy the delight of hearing him tell it.

"Oh, that was another one o' them crazy jobs I used to take when I did n't know no better. Why, I guess you remember 'bout that wreckin' job off Hamilton, Bermuda?"

He was settled in his chair now, his legs crossed, his head down between his shoulders.

"You see, after I quit work on the Ledge, I was put to 't for a job, and there come along a feller by the name of Lamson — the agent of an insurance company, who wanted me to go

to Bermuda and git up some forty-two pieces o' white I-talian marble that had been wrecked three years before off the harbor of Hamilton. They ran from three to twenty-one tons each, he said. So off I started with the Screamer. He did n't say, though, that the wreck lay on a coral reef eight miles from land, or I 'd stayed to home in New Bedford.

"When I got to where the wreck lay, you could n't see a thing 'bove water. So I got into an old divin' dress we had aboard, — one we used on the Ledge, — oiled up the pump, and went down to look her over, and, by Jiminy Criminy, not a scrap o' that wreck was left 'cept the rusty ironwork and that part o' the bottom plankin' of the vessel that lay under the stones! Everything else was eaten up with the worms! Funniest-lookin' place you ever see. The water was just as clear as air, and I could see every one o' them stone plain as daylight — looked like so many big lumps o' white sugar scattered 'round — and they *were* big! One of 'em weighed twenty-one tons, and none on 'em weighed less 'n five. Of course I knew how big they were 'fore I started, and I 'd fitted up the Screamer special to h'ist 'em, but I did n't know I 'd have to handle 'em twice; once from where they laid on that coral reef in

twenty-eight feet o' water and then unload 'em on the Navy Yard dock, above Hamilton, and then pick 'em up agin, load 'em 'board the Screamer, and unload 'em once more 'board a Boston brig they 'd sent down for 'em — one o' them high-waisted things 'bout sixteen feet from the water-line to the rail. That was the wust part of it."

Captain Bob stopped, felt in his pocket for a match, found it empty, rose from his chair, picked one from a match-safe on my desk, lighted his cigar, and resumed his seat again. I have found it wisest to let him have his own way in times like these. If I interrupt the flow of his talk it may stop for the day, and I lose the best part of the enjoyment of having him with me.

"Pretty decent chaps, them Englishmen"— puff-puff — the volume of smoke was all right once more. "One Monday morning I ran out of the Navy Yard dock within sight of the wreck. I had been layin' up over Sunday to get out of the way of a norther, when I luffed a little too soon, and bang went my bowsprit and scraped off about three feet of red paint from the end of the dock. One of the watchmen was on the stringpiece, and saw the whole thing. 'Come ashore,' he says, 'and

go and see the Admiral; you can't scrape no paint off this dock with *my* permission.'

"Well, I waited four hours for his nibs. When he come to his office quarters he was 'bout up to my arms, red as a can-buoy, and white hair stickin' up straight as a shoe-brush on his head. He looked cross enough to bite a tenpenny nail in two.

"'Ran into the dock, did ye — ran into Her Majesty's dock, and ye had room enough to turn a fleet in! Do you think we paint these docks for the fun of havin' you lubbers scrape it off? You 'll pay for paintin' it over, sir — that 's what you 'll do, or I 'll libel your boat, and send a file of marines down and tie her up,' and away he went up the dock to his office again.

"'Gosh!' I said to myself. 'Guess I 'm in a fix.' The boys stood around and heard every word, and I tell ye it warn't no joke. As to money, there warn't a ten-dollar bill in the crew. I 'd spent every cent I could rake and scrape to fit the Screamer out, and the boys were workin' on shares, and nobody was to get any money until the last stone — that big twenty-one-ton feller — was 'board the brig. Then I could go to the agents in Hamilton and draw two thirds of my contract. That twenty-

one-ton chunk, I forgot to tell ye, I had picked up the day before, and it was then aboard the Screamer, and we was on our way down to Hamilton, where the brig lay, when her nose scraped off the Admiral's paint.

"It did look kind o' nasty for us, and no mistake. One day more, and we 'd 'a' been through and had our money.

"'Go up and see him,' said the watchman. 'He gits cool sometimes as sudden as he gits hot.' So Bill Nevins, my engineer, who was workin' the h'ister, and I went up. The old feller was sittin' on the piazza in a big rattan chair.

"'Come aboard,' he hollered, soon 's he see Bill and me a-standin' in the garden-path with our hats off, lookin' like two jail-birds about to be sentenced. Well, we got up on the porch, and he looked us all over, and said, —

"'Have you got that money with you?' 'No,' I said, 'I have n't,' and I ups and tells him just how we was fixed, and how we had worked, and how short we was of grub and clothes and money, and then I said, 'An' now I come to tell ye that I hit the dock fair and square, and it was all my fault, and that I 'll pay whatever you say is right when I put this stone 'board and get my pay.'

"He looked me all over — I tell you I was pretty ragged; nothin' but a shirt and pants on, and they was almighty tore up, especially where most everybody wants to be covered — and Bill was no better. We 'd 'bout used up our clo'es so that sail-needles nor nothin' else would n't 'a' done us no good, and we had no time nor no spare cash to go ashore and get others.

"While I was a-talkin', the old feller's eyes was a-borin' into mine — then he roared out, 'No, sir; you won't! — you won't pay one d—d shillin', sir. You 'll go back to your work, and if there 's anything you want in the way of grub or supplies, send here for it and you shall have it. Good-day.' I tell ye he was a rum one."

"Was that the last time you saw him?" I asked.

"Not much. When we got 'longside the brig the next day, her Cap'n see that twenty-one-ton stone settin' up on the deck of the Screamer, lookin' like a big white church, and he got so scared he went ashore and started a yarn that we could n't lift that stone sixteen feet in the air, and over her rail and down into the hold, and that we 'd smash his brig, and it got to the Admiral's ears, and down come two

English engineers, in cork helmets and white jackets and gold buttons, spic' an' span as if they 'd stepped out of the chart-room of a yacht. One was a colonel and the other was a major. They were both just back from India, and natty-lookin' chaps as you ever saw. And clear stuff all the way through — you could tell that before they opened their mouths.

"I was on the deck of the Screamer, overhaulin' the fall, surrounded by most of the crew, gettin' ready to h'ist the stone, when I first saw 'em. They and the Cap'n were away up above me, leanin' over the rail, lookin' at the stone church that some o' the boys was puttin' the chains 'round. Bill Nevins was down in the fo'c's'le, firin' up, with the safety valve set at 125 pounds. He had half a keg o' rosin and a can o' kerosene to help out with in case we wanted a few pounds extry in the middle of the tea party. Pretty soon I heard one of 'em holler: —

"'Ahoy! Is the Captain aboard?'

"'He is,' I said, steppin' out. 'Who wants him?'

"'Colonel Throckmorton,' he says, 'and Major Severn.'

"'Come aboard, gentlemen,' I says.

"So down they come, the Colonel first, one

foot at a time touchin' the ladder, the Major following. When he reached the deck and wheeled around to look at me you just ought to have seen his face.

"'Are you the Captain?' he says, and he looked me over 'bout as the Admiral had done.

"'I be,' I said, 'Captain Robert Brandt, of Pigeon Cove, Cape Ann, master and owner of the sloop Screamer, at your service'—I kep' front side to him. 'What can I do for you?'

"'Well, Captain,' he began, 'perhaps it is none of our business, but the Captain of the brig here,' and he pointed up above him, 'has asked us to look over your tackle and see whether it is safe enough to lift this stone. He's afraid you'll drop it and smash his deck in. Since I've seen it, and what you propose to lift it with, I've told him there's no danger, for you'll never get it off the deck. We are both officers of the Engineering Corps, and it is our business to know about such things.'

"'What makes you think the Screamer won't lift it?' I asked.

"'Well,' says the Colonel, looking aloft, 'her boom ain't big enough, and that Manila rope is too light. I should think it was n't over

three and three-quarter-inch rope. We all know fifteen tons is enough weight for that size rope, even with a fourfold purchase, and we understand you say this stone weighs twenty-one.'

"'I 'm sorry, gentlemen,' I said, 'and if you are worried about it you 'd better go 'board the brig, for I 'm about ready to pick the stone up and land her.'

"Well, the Major said he guessed he would, if I was determined to pull the mast out of my sloop, but the Colonel said he 'd stay by and see it out.

"Just then Bill Nevins stuck his head out of the fo'c's'le. He was blacker than I was; all smeared with grease and stripped to his waist. It was hot enough anywhere, but it was sizzlin' down where he was.

"'All ready, Cap'n,' he says. 'She 's got every pound she can carry.'

"I looked everything over — saw the butt of the boom was playin' free in the wooden socket, chucked in a lot of tallow so it could move easy, give an extra twist to the end of the guy, and hollered to Bill to go ahead. She went chuckety-chuck, chuckety-chuck for half a dozen turns; then she slowed down soon as she struck the full weight, and began to pant like an old

horse climbin' a hill. All this time the Colonel was callin' out from where he stood near the tiller: 'She 'll never lift it, Captain — she 'll never lift it.'

"Next come a scrapin' 'long the deck, and the big stone swung clear with a foot o' daylight 'tween it and the deck. Then up she went, crawlin' slowly inch by inch, till she reached the height of the brig's rail.

"Now come the wust part. I knew that when I gave orders to slack away the guy-rope so as to swing the stone aboard the brig, the Screamer would list over and dip her rail in the water. So I made a jump for the rope ladder and shinned up the brig's side so as to take a hand in landin' the stone properly on the brig's deck so as to save her beams and break the jar when I lowered the stone down. I had one eye now on the stone and the other on the water, which was curling over the Screamer's rail and makin' for the fo'c's'le hatch. Should the water pour down this hatch, out would go my fires and maybe up would come her b'iler.

"'Ease away on that guy and lower away easy,' I hollered to Bill. The stone dropped to within two feet of the brig's deck and swung back and for'ards. Then I heard Bill yell. I was expectin' it.

"'Water's comin' in!'

"I leaned over the brig's rail and could see the slop of the sea combin' over the Screamer's fo'c's'le hatch. Bill's fires *would* be out the next minute. There was just two feet now 'tween the stone and the deck where I stood — too much to drop; but there was nothing else to do, and I hollered, —

"'All gone.'

"Down she come with a run, struck the big timbers on the deck, and by Jiminy! ye could 'a' heard that old brig groan from stem to stern.

"I jumped on top of the stone and threw off the shackles, and the Screamer came up on an even keel as easy as a duck ridin' the water.

"You just oughter seen the Colonel when the old boat righted herself, and he had climbed up and stood 'longside the Major a-talkin' it over.

"Pretty soon he came up to where I was a-gettin' the tackle ready to lower the stone in the hold, and he says: —

"'Well, you made your word good, Cap'n, but I want to tell you that nobody but an American could 'a' done it. It would cost me my commission if I should try to do what you have done.'

"'Well, gentlemen,' I says, 'what was wrong about it? What's the matter with the Screamer's rig?'

"'Well, the size of the rope for one thing,' says the Colonel, 'and the boom.'

"'Well, p'haps you ain't looked it over,' I says, and I began unravelling an end that stuck out near the shackle. 'If you 'll look close here' —and I held the end of the rope up— 'you 'll see that every stran' of that rope is made of the best Manila yarn, and laid as smooth as silk. I stood over that rope myself when it was put together. Old Sam Hanson of New Bedford laid up that rope, and there ain't no better nowhere. I knew what it had to do, and I warn't goin' to take no chances of its not doin' it right. As to that boom, I want to tell ye that I picked that boom out o' about two hundred sticks in Tom Carlin's shipyard, in Stonington, and had it scraped and ironed just to please me. There ain't a rotten knot in it from butt to finish, and mighty few of any other kind. That stick 's *growed right* — that 's what 's the matter with it; and it bellies out in the middle, just where it ought to be thickest.'

"Well, they did n't say nothin' for a while, 'cept to walk round the stone once or twice and slap it with their hands, as if they wanted to

make sure it was all there. My men were all over it now, and we was gettin' things in shape to finish up. I tell ye the boys were mighty glad, and so was I. It had been a long pull of six months' work, and we were out of most everything, and as soon as the big stone was down in the brig's hold, and warped back and stowed with the others — and that would n't take but a day or two more — we would clean up, get our money, and light out for home.

"All this time the Colonel and the Major were buzzin' each other off by the other rail. Pretty soon they both come over to where I stood, and the Colonel reached out his hand.

"'Cap'n Brandt,' he says — and he had a look in his face as if he meant it — and he did, every word of it — 'it would give Major Severn and myself great pleasure if you would dine with us to-night at the Canteen. The Admiral is coming, and some brother officers who would be pleased to know you.'

"Well, I was struck all of a heap for a minute, knowing what kind of clo'es I had to go in, and so I says: —

"'Well, gentlemen, that 's very nice of you, and I see you mean it, and if I had anything fittin' to wear there 's nothin' I would like better; but ye see how I 'm fixed,' and I lifted

my arms so he could see a few holes that he might 'a' missed before, and I motioned to some other parts of my get-up that needed repairs.

"'That don't make no difference, Cap'n, what kind of clo'es you come in. We dine at eight o'clock.'

"Of course I knew I could n't go, and I did n't want 'em to think I intended to go when I did n't, so I says, rather positive-like:—

"'Very much obliged, gentlemen, but I guess I 'll have to get you to count me out this time.' I knowed I warn't fittin' to sit at anybody's table, especially if that old Admiral was comin'.

"The Colonel see I was in earnest, and he stepped up, quick-like, and laid his hand on my shoulder.

"'Captain Brandt,' he says, 'we ain't worryin' 'bout your clo'es, and don't you worry. You can come in your shirt, you can come in your socks, or you can come without one damned rag — only come!'"

The Captain stopped, shook the ashes from his cigar, slowly raised himself to his feet, and reached for his hat.

"Did you go, Captain?" I asked.

The Captain looked at me for a moment with one of those quizzical glances which so often

light up his face when something amuses him, and said, as he blew a cloud of smoke to the ceiling: —

"Well, I did n't forget my manners. When it got dark — dark, mind ye — I went up and sat on the piazza and had a smoke with 'em — Admiral and all. But I did n't go to dinner — not in them pants."

A PROCESSION OF UMBRELLAS

I

THIS all happened on the banks of the Seine, above St. Cloud — above Suresne, in fact, or rather its bridge — the new one that has pieced out the old one with the quaint stone arches that we love.

A silver-gray haze, a pure French gray, hung over the river, softening the sky-line of the near-by hills, and making ghosts of a row of gendarme poplars guarding the opposite bank.

On my side of the stream wandered a path close to the water's edge — so close that I could fill my water-cups without leaving my sketching-stool. Over this path, striped with shadows, big trees towered, their gnarled branches interlaced above my head. On my right, rising out of a greensward cleared of all underbrush, towered other trees, their black trunks sharp-cut against the haze. In the distance, side by side with the path, wound the river, still asleep, save where it flashed into waves of silver laughter at the touch of some frolicsome puff of

wind. Elsewhere, although the sun was now hours high, it dozed away, nestling under the overhanging branches making their morning toilet in its depths. But for these long, straight flashes of silver light glinting between the tree-trunks, one could not tell where the haze ended and the river began.

As I worked on, my white umbrella tilted at the exact angle so that my palette, hand, and canvas would be hidden from the inquisitive sun, a group of figures emerged from a clump of low trees, and made their way across the greensward — the man in an ivory-black coat, evidently a priest, even at that distance; the woman in a burnt-umber dress with a dot of Chinese white for a head — probably a cap; and the third, a girl of six or eight in a brown-madder dress and yellow-ochre hat.

An out-door painter, while at work, tumbles everything that crosses his path or comes within range of his vision into the crucible of his palette. The most majestic of mountains and the softest of summer clouds are to him but flat washes of cobalt, and the loveliest of dimples on the fairest of cheeks but a shadow-tone and a high-light made real by pats of indigo and vermilion.

So in the three figures went among my trees,

the priest in the background against a mass of yellow light — black against yellow is always a safe contrast; the burnt-umber woman breaking the straight line of a trunk, and the child — red on green — intensifying a slash of zinober that illumined my own grassy sward.

Then my interest in the group ceased. The priest, no doubt, was taking his sister, or his aunt, or his mother, with their own or somebody else's little girl, out for an airing, and they had come at the precise moment when I had begun to long for just such a collection of people; and now they could take themselves off and out of my perspective, particularly the reddish-brown girl who kept on dancing in the sunniest places, running ahead of the priest and the woman, lighting up and accentuating half a dozen other corners of the wood interior before me in as many minutes, and making me regret before the paint was half dry on her own little figure that I had not waited for a better composition.

Then she caught sight of my umbrella.

She came straight toward me with that slowing of pace as she approached the nearer, her curiosity getting the better of her timidity — quite as a fawn or a little calf would have done, attracted by some bit of color or movement

which was new to it. The brown-madder dress I now saw was dotted with little spots of red, like sprays of berries; the yellow-ochre hat was wound with a blue ribbon, and tied with a bow on one side. I could see, too, that she wore slippers, and that her hair was platted in two pigtails, and hung down her back, the ends fastened with a ribbon that matched the one on her hat.

She stood quite still, her face perfectly impassive, her little hands clasped together, the brim of her hat shading her eyes, which looked straight at my canvas.

I gave no sign of her presence. It is dangerous to break down the reserve of silence, which is often the only barrier between an out-door painter and the crowds that surround him. Persisted in, it not only compels their respect, even to the lowering of their voices and the tip-toeing in and out of the circle about you, but shortens the time of their visits, a consummation devoutly to be wished. So I worked on in silence, never turning toward this embodiment of one of Boutet de Monvel's drawings, whose absorbed face I could see out of one corner of my eye.

Then a ripple of laughter broke the stillness, and a little finger was thrust out, stopping

within a hair's-breadth of the dot of Chinese white, still wet, which topped my burnt-umber figure.

"Très drôle, Monsieur!"

The voice was sweeter than the laugh. One of those flute-like, bird-throated voices that children often have who live in the open all their lives, chasing butterflies or gathering wild flowers.

Then came a halloo from the greensward. The priest was coming toward us, calling out, as he walked, —

"Susette! Susette!"

He, too, underwent a change. The long, ivory-black cassock, so unmistakable in the atmospheric perspective, became an ordinary frock-coat; the white band of a collar developed into the regulation secular pattern, and the silk hat, although of last year's shape, conformed less closely in its lines to one belonging exclusively to the clergy. The face, though, as I could see in my hurried glance, and even at that distance, was the smooth, clean-shaven face of a priest — the face of a man of fifty, I should think, who had spent all his life in the service of others.

Again came the voice, this time quite near.

"Susette! Susette!"

The child, without turning her head, waved her hand in reply, looked earnestly into my face, and with a quick bending of one knee in courtesy, and a "Merci, M'sieu; merci," ran with all her speed toward the priest, who stretched wide his arms, half lifting her from the ground in the embrace. Then a smile broke over his face, so joyous, so full of love and tenderness, so much the unconscious index of the heart that prompted it, that I laid down my palette to watch them.

I have known many priests in my time, and I have never ceased to marvel at the beauty of the tie which binds them to the little ones of their flocks. I have never been in a land where priests and children were not companions. These long-frocked guardians sit beside their playgrounds, with noses in their breviaries, or they head processions of boys and girls on the way to chapel, or they follow, two by two, behind a long string of blue-checked aprons and severe felt hats, the uniform of the motherless; or they teach the little vagrants by the hour — often it is the only schooling that these children get.

But I never remember one of them carrying such a waif about in his arms, nor one irradiated by such a flash of heavenly joy when some

child, in a mad frolic, saw fit to scrape her muddy shoes down the front of his clean, black cassock.

The beatific smile itself was not altogether new to me. Any one else can see it who wanders into the Gallery of the Prado. It irradiates the face of an old saint by Ribera — a study for one of his large canvases, and is hung above the line. I used to stand before it for hours, studying the technique. The high-lights on the face are cracked in places, and the shadows are blackened by time, but the expression is that of one who looks straight up into heaven. And there is another — a Correggio, in the Hermitage, a St. Simon or St. Timothy, or some other old fellow — whose eyes run tears of joy, and whose upturned face reflects the light of the sun. Yet there was something in the face of the priest before me that neither of the others had — a peculiar human quality, which shone out of his eyes, as he stood bareheaded in the sunshine, the little girl in his arms. If the child had been his daughter — his very own and all he had, and if he had caught her safe from some danger that threatened her life, it could not have expressed more clearly the joyousness of gratitude or the bliss inspired by the sense of possessing something so priceless that every other emotion was absorbed.

It was all over in a moment. He did not continue to beam irradiating beatitudes, as the old Ribera and the older Correggio have done for hundreds of years. He simply touched his hat to me, tucked the child's hand into his own, and led her off to her mother.

I kept at my work. For me the incident, delightful as it was, was closed. All I remembered, as I squeezed the contents of another tube on to my palette, was the smile on the face of the priest.

The weather now began to take part in the general agitation. The lazy haze, roused by the joyous sun, had gathered its skirts together and had slipped over the hills. The sun in its turn had been effaced by a big cloud with scalloped edges which had overspread the distant line of the river, blotting out the flashes of silver laughter, and so frightening the little waves that they scurried off to the banks, some even trying to climb up the stone coping out of the way of the rising wind. A cool gust of air, out on a lark, now swept down the path, and, with lance in rest, toppled over my white umbrella. Big drops of rain fell about me, spitting the dust like spent balls. Growls of thunder were heard overhead. One of those rollicking, two-faced thunder-squalls, with the

sun on one side and the blackness of night on the other, was approaching.

The priest had seen it, for he had the child pickaback and was running across the sward. The woman had seen it, too, for she was already collecting her baskets, preparing to follow, and I was not far behind. Before she had reached the edge of the woods I had overtaken her, my traps under my arm, my white umbrella over my head.

"The Châlet Cycle is the nearest," she volunteered, grasping the situation, and pointing to a path opening to the right as she spoke.

"Is that where he has taken the child?" I asked, hurriedly.

"No, Monsieur — Susette has gone home. It is only a little way."

I plunged on through the wet grass, my eyes on the opening through the trees, the rain pouring from my umbrella. Before I had reached the end of the path the rain ceased and the sun broke through, flooding the wet leaves with dazzling light.

These two, the clouds and the sun, were evidently bent on mischief, frightening little waves and painters and bright-eyed children and good priests who loved them!

II

Do you happen to know the Châlet Cycle?

If you are a staid old painter who takes life as he finds it, and who loves to watch the procession from the sidewalk without any desire to carry one of the banners or to blow one of the horns — one of your three-meals-a-day, no heel-taps, and go-to-bed-at-ten-o'clock kind of a man, then make a note of the Cycle. The melons are excellent; the omelets are wonders, and the salads something to be remembered. But, if you are two-and-twenty, with the world in a sling and both ends of the sling in your hand, and if this is your first real outing since your college days, it would be just as well for you to pass it by and take your coffee and rolls at the little restaurant over the bridge, or the one farther down the street.

Believe me, a most seductive place is this Châlet Cycle, with its tables set out under the trees!

A place, at night, all hanging lanterns and shaded candles on tête-à-tête tables, and close-drawn curtains about the kiosks. A place, by day, where you lunch under giant red and white umbrellas, with seats for two, and these half hidden by Japanese screens, so high that even

A PLACE, AT NIGHT, ALL HANGING LANTERNS AND SHADED CANDLES.

the waiters cannot look over. A place with a great music-stand smothered in palms and shady walks and cosey seats, out of sight of anybody, and with deaf, dumb, and blind waiters. A place with a big open gateway where everybody can enter and — ah! there is where the danger lies — a little by-path all hedged about with lilac bushes, where anybody can escape to the woods by the river — an ever-present refuge in time of trouble and in constant use — more 's the pity — for it is the *unexpected* that always happens at the Châlet Cycle.

The prettiest girls in Paris, in bewitching bicycle costumes, linger about the music-stand, losing themselves in the arbors and shrubberies. The kiosks are almost all occupied: charming little Chinese pagodas these — eight-sided, with lattice screens on all sides — screens so tightly woven that no curious idler can see in, and yet so loosely put together that each hidden inmate can see out. Even the trees overhead have a hand in the villany, spreading their leaves thickly, so that the sun itself has a hard time to find out what is going on beneath their branches. All this you become aware of as you enter the big, wide gate.

Of course, being quite alone, with only my battered old umbrella for company, I did not

want a whole kiosk to myself, or even half of a giant umbrella. Any quiet corner would do for me, I told the Maître d'Hôtel, who relieved me of my sketch-trap — anywhere out of the rain when it should again break loose, which it was evidently about to do, judging from the appearance of the clouds — anywhere, in fact, where I could eat a filet smothered in mushrooms, and drink a pint of vin ordinaire in peace.

"No, I expected no one." This in answer to a peculiar lifting of the eyebrows and slight wave of his hand as he drew out a chair in an unoccupied kiosk commanding a view of the grounds. Then, in rather a positive tone, I added: —

"Send me a waiter to take my order — orders for *one*, remember." I wanted to put a stop to his insinuations at once. Nothing is so annoying, when one's hair is growing gray, as being misunderstood — especially by a waiter."

Affairs overhead now took a serious turn. The clouds evidently disapproving of the hilarious goings-on of the sun — poking its head out just as the cloud was raining its prettiest — had, in retaliation, stopped up all the holes the sun could peer through, and had started in to rain harder than ever. The waiters caught the

angry frown on the cloud's face, and took it at its spoken word — it had begun to thunder again — and began piling up the chairs to protect their seats, covering up the serving-tables, and getting every perishable article under shelter. The huge mushroom-umbrellas were collapsed and rushed into the kiosks — some of them into the one where I sat, it being the largest; small tables were turned upside down, and tilted against the tree-trunks, and the storm-curtains of all the little kiosks let down and buttoned tight to the frames. Waiters ran hither and thither, with napkins and aprons over their heads, carrying fresh courses for the several tables or escaping with their empty dishes.

In the midst of this mêlée a cab dashed up to the next kiosk to mine, the wheels cutting into the soft gravel; the curtains were quickly drawn wide by a half-drowned waiter, and a young man with jet-black hair and an Oriental type of face slipped in between them.

Another carriage now dashed up, following the grooves of the first wheels — not a cab this time, but a perfectly appointed coupé, with two men in livery on the box, and the front windows banked with white chrysanthemums. I could not see her face from where I sat — she was

too quick for that — but I saw the point of a tiny shoe as it rested for an instant on the carriage step and a whirl of lace about a silk stocking. I caught also the movement of four hands — two outstretched from the curtains of the kiosk and two from the door of the coupé.

Of course, if I had been a very inquisitive and very censorious old painter, with a tendency to poke my nose into and criticise other people's business, I would at once have put two and two together and asked myself innumerable questions. Why, for instance, the charming couple did not arrive at the same moment, and in the same cab? or why they came all the way out to Suresne in the rain, when there were so many costly little tables at Laurent's or at the Voisin, on the Rue Cambon, or in the Café Anglais on the Boulevard. Whether, too, either one was married, and if so which one, and if so again, what the other fellow and the other woman would do if he or she found it all out; and whether, after all, it was worth the candle when it did all come out, which it was bound to do some day sooner or later. Or I could have indulged in the customary homilies, and decried the tendencies of the times, and said to myself how the world was going to the dogs because of such goings-

on ; quite forgetting the days when I, too, had the world in a sling, and was whirling it around my head with all the impetuosity and abandon of youth.

But I did none of these things — that is, nothing Paul Pryish or presuming. I merely beckoned to the Maître d'Hôtel, as he stood poised on the edge of the couple's kiosk, with the order for their breakfast in his hands, and, when he had reached my halfway station on his way across the garden to the kitchen, stopped him with a question. Not with my lips — that is quite unnecessary with an old-time Maître d'Hôtel — but with my two eyebrows, one thumb, and a part of one shoulder.

"The nephew of the Sultan, Monsieur" — he answered, instantly.

"And the lady ?"

"Ah, that is Mademoiselle Ernestine Béraud of the Variété. She comes quite often. For Monsieur, it is his first time this season."

He evidently took me for an old habitué. There are some compensations, after all, in the life of a staid old painter.

With these solid facts in my possession, I breathed a little easier. Mademoiselle Ernestine Béraud, from the little I had seen of her, was quite capable of managing her own affairs with-

out my own or anybody else's advice, even if I had been disposed to give it. She no doubt loved the lambent-eyed gentleman to distraction ; the kiosk was their only refuge, and the whole affair was being so discreetly managed that neither the lambent-eyed gentleman nor his houri would be obliged to escape by means of the lilac-bordered path in the rear on this or any other morning.

And if they should, what did it matter to me ? The little row in the cloud overhead would soon end in further torrents of tears, as all such rows do ; the sun would have its way after all and dry every one of them up ; the hungry part of me would have its filet and pint of St. Julien, and the painter part of me would go back to the little path by the river and finish its sketch.

Again I tried to signal the Maître d'Hôtel as he dashed past on his way to the kiosk. This time he was under one of the huge umbrellas which an "omnibus" was holding over him, Rajah-fashion. He had a plump melon, half smothered in ice, in his hands, to protect it from the down-pour, the rain making gargoyles of the points of the ribs of the umbrella. Evidently the breakfast was too important and the expected fee too large to entrust it to an underling. He must serve it himself.

Up to this moment no portion of my order had

materialized. No cover for one, nor filet, nor vin ordinaire, nor waiter had appeared. The painter was growing impatient. The man inside was becoming hungry.

I waited until he emerged with an empty dish, watched him grasp the giant umbrella, teeter on the edge of the kiosk for a moment, and plunge through the gravel, now rivers of water, toward my kiosk, the "omnibus" following as best he could.

"A thousand pardons, Monsieur" — he cried from beneath his shelter, as he read my face. "It will not be long now. It is coming — here, you can see for yourself" — and he pointed across the garden, and tramped on, the water spattering his ankles.

I looked and saw a solemn procession of huge umbrellas, the ones used over the tête-à-tête tables beneath the trees, slowly wending its way toward where I sat, with all the measured movement and dignity of a file of Eastern potentates out for an airing.

Under each umbrella were two waiters, one carrying the umbrella and the other a portion of my breakfast. The potentate under the first umbrella, who carried the wine, proved to be a waiter-in-chief; the others bearing the filet, plates, dishes, and glasses were ordinary "omni-

buses," pressed into service as palanquin-bearers by reason of the storm.

The waiter-in-chief, with the bottle, dodged from under his bungalow, leaving it outside and still open, like a stranded circus tent, stepped into my kiosk, mopped the rain from his coat-sleeves and hands with a napkin, and, bowing solemnly, pointed to the label on the bottle. This meeting my approval, he relieved the rear-guard of the dishes, arranged the table, drew the cork of the St. Julien, filled my glass, dismissed the assistants, and took his place behind my chair.

The closeness of the quarters, the protection it afforded from the raging elements, the perils my companion had gone through to serve me, made possible a common level on which we could stand. We discussed the storm, the prospect of its clearing, the number of unfortunates in the adjacent Bois who were soaked to the skin, especially the poor little bicycle girls in their cotton bloomers, now collapsed and bedraggled. We talked of the great six-day, cross-country bicycle race, and how the winner, tired out, had wabbled over the Bridge that same morning, with the whole pack behind him, having won by less than five minutes. We talked of the people who came and went, and who they were, and how often they dined, and what they spent, and ate and

drank, and of the rich American who had given the waiter a gold louis for a silver franc, and who was too proud to take it back when his attention was called to the mistake (which my companion could not but admit was quite foolish of him); and, finally, of the dark-skinned Oriental with the lambent eyes, and the adorable Ernestine with the pointed shoes and openwork silk stockings and fluffy skirts, who occupied the kiosk within ten feet of where I sat and he stood.

During the conversation I was busy with my knife and fork, my eyes at intervals taking in the scene before me ; the comings and goings of the huge umbrellas — one, two, or three, as the serving of the dishes demanded, the rain streaming from their sides ; now the fish, now the salad, now a second bottle of wine in a cooler, and now the last course of all on an empty plate, which my companion said was the bill, and which he characterized as the most important part of the procession, except the pourboire. Each time the procession came to a full stop outside the kiosk until the sentinel waiter relieved them of their burdens. My sympathies constantly went out to this man. There was no room for him inside, and certainly no wish for his company, and so he must, perforce, balance himself under his umbrella, first on one leg and then on the other, in

his effort to escape the spatter which now reached his knees, quite as would a wet chicken seeking shelter under a cart-body.

I say my companion and I "talked" of these several sights and incidents as I ate my luncheon. And yet, really, up to this time I had not once looked into his face, quite a necessary thing in conducting a conversation of any duration. But then one rarely does in talking to a waiter when he is serving you. My remarks had generally been addressed to the dish in front of me, or to the door opposite, through which I looked, and his rejoinders to the back of my shirt-collar. If he had sat opposite, or had moved into the perspective, I might once in a while have caught a glimpse, over my glass or spoon, of his smileless, mask-like face, a thing impossible, of course, with him constantly behind my chair.

When, however, in the course of his monotone, he mentioned the name of Mademoiselle Ernestine Béraud and that of the distinguished kinsman of His Serene Highness, the Grand Pan-Jam of the Orient, I turned my head in his direction.

"You know the Mademoiselle, then?"

My waiter shrugged his shoulders, his face still impenetrable.

"Monsieur, I know everybody in Paris. Why not? Twenty-three years a waiter. Twenty years at the Café de la Paix in Paris, and three years here. Do you wonder?"

There are in my experience but four kinds of waiters the world over. First, the thin, nervous waiter, with a set smile, who is always brushing away imaginary crumbs, adjusting the glasses — an inch this way, an inch that way, and then back again to their first position, talking all the time, whether spoken to or not, and losing interest the moment you pay him his fee. Then the stolid, half-asleep waiter, fat and perpetually moist, who considers his duties over when he has placed your order on the cloth and moved the wine within reach of your hand. Next the apprentice waiter, promoted from assistant cook or scullion-boy, who carries on a conversation in signs behind your back with the waiter opposite him, smothering his laughter at intervals in the same napkin with which he wipes your plate, and who, when he changes a course, slants the dishes up his sleeve, keeping the top one in place with his chin, replacing the plates again with a wavy motion, as if they were so many quoits, each one circling into its place — a trick of which he is immensely proud.

And last — and this is by no means a large class — the grave, dignified, self-possessed, well-mannered waiter; smooth-shaven, spotlessly clean, noiseless, smug, and attentive. He generally walks with a slight limp, an infirmity due to his sedentary habits and his long acquaintance with his several employers' decanters. He is never under fifty, is round of form, short in the legs, broad of shoulder, and wears his gray hair cut close. He has had a long and varied experience; he has been buttons, valet, second man, first man, lord high butler, and then down the scale again to plain waiter. This has not been his fault but his misfortune — the settling of an estate, it may be, or the death of a master. He has, with unerring judgment, summed you up in his mind before you have taken your seat, and has gauged your intelligence and breeding with the first dish you ordered. Intimate knowledge of the world and of men and of women — especially the last — has developed in him a distrust of all things human. He alone has seen the pressure of the jewelled hands as they lay on the cloth or under it, the lawful partner opposite. He alone has caught the last whispered word as the opera cloak fell about her shoulders, and knows just where they dined the next day, and who paid for it and

why. Being looked upon as part of the appointments of the place, like the chandeliers or the mirrors or the electric bell that answers when spoken to but never talks back, he has, unconsciously to those he serves, become the custodian of their closest secrets. These he keeps to himself. Were he to open his mouth he could not only break up a score or more of highly respectable families, but might possibly upset a ministry.

My waiter belonged to this last group.

I saw it in every deferential gesture of his body and every modulated tone of his voice. Whether his moral nature had become warped and cracked and twisted out of all shape by constant daily and nightly contact — especially the last — with the sort of life he had led, or whether some of the old-time refinement of his better days still clung to him, was a question I could not decide from the exhibits before me — certainly not from the calm eyes which never wavered, nor the set mouth which never for a moment relaxed, the only important features in the face so far as character-reading is concerned.

I determined to draw him out; not that he interested me in any way, but simply because such studies are instructive. Then, again, his account of his experiences might be still more

instructive. When should I have a better opportunity? Here was a man steeped in the life of Paris up to his very eyelids, one thoroughly conversant with the peccadilloes of innumerable viveurs — peccadilloes interesting even to staid old painters, simply as object-lessons, especially those committed by the other gay Lothario: the fellow, for instance, who did not know she was dangerous until his letter of credit collapsed; or the peccadilloes of the beautiful moth who believed the candle lighting her path to be an incandescent bulb of joy, until her scorched wings hung about her bare shoulders: That kind of peccadillo.

So I pushed back my chair, opened my cigar-case, and proceeded to adjust the end of my mental probe. There was really nothing better to do, even if I had no such surgical operation in view. It was still raining, and neither I nor the waiter could leave our Chinese junk of an island until the downpour ceased or we were rescued by a lifeboat or an umbrella.

"And this nephew of the Sultan," I began again between puffs, addressing my remark to the match in my companion's hand, which was now burning itself out at the extreme end of my cigar. "Is he a new admirer?"

"Quite new — only ten days or so, I think."

"And the one before — the old one — what does he think?" I asked this question with one of those cold, hollow, heartless laughs, such as croupiers are supposed to indulge in when they toss a five-franc piece back to a poor devil who has just lost his last hundred Napoleons at baccarat — I have never seen this done and have never heard the laugh, but that is the way the story-books put it — particularly the blood-curdling part of the laugh.

"You mean Pierre Channet, the painter, Monsieur?"

I had, of course, never heard of Pierre Channet, the painter, in my life, but I nodded as knowingly as if I had been on the most intimate relations with him for years. Then, again, this was my only way of getting down to his personal level, the only way I could draw him out and get at his real character. By taking his side of the question, he would unbosom himself the more freely, and, perhaps, incidentally, some of the peccadilloes — some of the most wicked.

"He will *not think*, Monsieur. They pulled him out of the river last month."

"Drowned?"

His answer gave me a little start, but I did not betray myself.

"So they said. The water trickled along his

nose for two days as he lay on the slab, before they found out who he was.

"In the morgue?" I inquired in a tone of surprise. I spoke as if this part of the story had not reached me.

"In the morgue, Monsieur."

The repeated words came as cold and merciless as the drops of water that fell on poor Channet as he lay under the gas-jets.

"Drowned himself for love of Mademoiselle Béraud, you say?"

"Quite true, Monsieur. He is not the only one. I know four."

"And she began to love another in a week?" My indignation nearly got the better of me this time, but I do not think he noticed it.

"Why not, Monsieur? One must live."

As he spoke he moved an ash-tray deliberately within reach of my hand, and poured the balance of the St. Julien into my glass without a quiver.

I smoked on in silence. Every spark of human feeling had evidently been stifled in him. The Juggernaut of Paris, in rolling over him, had broken every generous impulse, flattening him into a pulp of brutal selfishness. That is why his face was so smooth and cold, his eyes so dull and his voice so monotonous. I under-

stood it all now. I changed the subject. I did not know where it would lead if I kept on. Drowned lovers were not what I was looking for.

"You say you have only been two years in Suresne?" I resumed, carelessly, flicking the ashes from my cigar.

"But two years, Monsieur."

"Why did you leave Paris?"

"Ah, when one is over fifty it is quite done. Is it not so, Monsieur?"—this made with a little deferential wave of his hand. I noted the tribute to the staid painter, and nodded approvingly. He was evidently climbing up to my level. Perhaps this plank, slender as it was, might take him out of the slough and land him on higher and better ground.

"Yes, you are right. And so you came to Suresne to be quiet."

"Not altogether, Monsieur. I came to be near —Well! we are never too old for that— Is it not so?" He said it quite simply, quite as a matter of course, the tones of his voice as monotonous as any he had yet used—just as he had spoken of poor Channet in the morgue with the water trickling over his dead face.

"Oh, then, even at fifty you have a sweetheart!" I blurted out with a sudden twist of

my probe. I felt now that I might as well follow the iniquity to the end.

"It is true, Monsieur."

"Is she pretty?" As long as I was dissecting, I might at least discover the root of the disease. This remark, however, was not addressed to his face, but to a crumb of ashes on the cloth, which I was trying to remove with the point of a knife. He might not have answered, or liked it, had I fired the question at him point-blank.

"Very pretty" — still the same monotone.

"And you love her!" It was up to the hilt now.

"She is the only thing I have left to love, Monsieur," he answered, calmly.

Then, bending over me, he added, —

"Monsieur, I do not think I am mistaken. Were you not painting along the river this morning?"

"Yes."

"And a little child stood beside you while you worked?" Something in his voice as he spoke made me raise my head. To my intense amazement the listless eyes were alight with a tenderness that seemed to permeate his whole being, and a smile of infinite sweetness was playing

about his mouth — the smile of the old saint — the Ribera of the Prado!

"Yes, of course; the one playing with the priest," I answered, quickly. "But" —

"No; that was me, Monsieur. I have often been taken for a priest, especially when I am off duty. It is the smooth face that misled you" — and he passed his hand over his cheeks and chin.

"You the priest!" This came as a distinct surprise. "Ah, yes, I do see the resemblance now. And so your sweetheart is the woman in the white cap." At last I had reached his tender spot.

"No, you are wrong again, Monsieur. The woman in the white cap is my sister. My sweetheart is the little girl — my granddaughter, Susette."

I raised my own white umbrella over my head, picked up my sketch-trap, and took the path back to the river. The rain had ceased, the sun was shining — brilliant, radiant sunshine; all the leaves studded with diamonds; all the grasses strung with opals, every stone beneath my feet a gem.

I didn't know when I left what became of Mademoiselle Ernestine Béraud, with her last lover under the sod, and the new one shut up in

the kiosk, and I did n't care. I saw only a little girl — a little girl in a brown-madder dress and yellow-ochre hat: with big, blue eyes, a tiny pug-nose, a wee, kissable mouth, and two long pigtails down her back. Looking down into her bonny face from its place, high up on the walls of the Prado, was an old cracked saint, his human eyes aglow with a light that came straight from heaven.

"DOC" SHIPMAN'S FEE

IT was in the Doctor's own office that he told me this story. He has told me a dozen more, all pulled from the rag-bag of his experience, like strands of worsted from an old-fashioned reticule. Some were bright-colored, some were gray and dull — some black; most of them, in fact, sombre in tone, for the Doctor has spent much of his life climbing up the rickety stairs of gloomy tenements. Now and then there comes out a thread of gold which he weaves into the mesh of his talk — some gleam of pathos or heroism or unselfishness, lightening the whole fabric. This kind of story he loves best to tell.

The Doctor is not one of your new-fashioned doctors quartered in a brownstone house off the Avenue, with a butler opening the door; a pair of bob-tailed grays; a coupé with a note-book tucked away in its pocket bearing the names of various millionaires; an office panelled in oak; a waiting-room lined with patients reading last month's magazines until he should send for them. He has no such abode nor belongings.

He lives all alone by himself in an old-fashioned house on Bedford Place — oh, such a queer, hunched-up old house and such a quaint old neighborhood poked away behind Jefferson Market — and he opens the door himself and sees everybody who comes — there are not a great many of them nowadays, more 's the pity.

There are only a few such houses left up the queer old-fashioned street where he lives. The others were pulled down long ago, or pushed out to the line of the sidewalk and three or four stories piled on top of them. Some of these modern ones have big carved marble porticos, made of painted zinc and fastened to the new brickwork. Inside these portals are a row of bronze bells and a line of speaking-tubes with cards below bearing the names of those who dwell above.

The Doctor's house is not like one of these. It would have been had it not belonged to his old mother, who died long ago and who begged him never to sell it while he lived. He was thirty years younger then, but he is still there and so is the old house. It looks a little ashamed of its shabbiness when you come upon it suddenly hiding behind its pushing neighbors. First comes an iron fence with a gate never shut,

and then a flagged path dividing a grass-plot, and then an old-fashioned wooden stoop with two steps, guarded by a wooden railing (many a day since these were painted); and over these railings and up the supports which carry the roof of the portico straggles a honeysuckle that does its best to hide the shabbiness of the shingles and the old waterspout and sagging gutter, and fails miserably when it gets to the farther cornice, which has rotted away, showing under its dismal paint the black and brown rust of decaying wood.

Then way in under the portico comes the door with the name-plate, and next to it, level with the floor of the piazza or portico — either you please, for it is a combination of both — are two long French windows, always open in summer evenings and a-light on winter nights with the reflection of the Doctor's soft-coal fire, telling of the warmth and cheer within.

For it is a cheery place. It does n't look like a doctor's office. There are dingy haircloth sofas, it is true, and a row of shelves with bottles, and funny-looking boxes on the mantel — one an electric battery — and rows and rows of books on the walls. But there are no dreadful instruments about. If there are, you don't see them.

The big chair he sits in would swallow up a smaller man. It is covered with Turkey red and has a roll cushion for his head. There are two of these chairs — one for you, or me; this last has big arms that come out and catch you under the elbows, a mighty help to a man when he has just learned that his liver or lungs or heart or some other part of him has gone wrong and needs overhauling.

Then there is a canary that sings all the time, and a small dog — oh, such a low-down, ill-bred, tousled dog; kind of a dog that might have been raised around a lumber-yard — was, probably — one ear gone, half of his tail missing; and there are some pots of flowers, and on the wall near the window, where everybody can see, is a case of butterflies impaled on pins and covered by a glass. No, you would n't think the Doctor's office a grewsome place, and you certainly would n't think the Doctor was a grewsome person — not when you come to know him.

If you met him out on Sunday afternoon in his black clothes, white neck-cloth, and well-brushed hat, his gray hair straggling over his coat-collar, pounding his cane on the pavement as he walked, you would say he had a Sunday-school class somewhere.

If you should come upon him suddenly, seated before his fire, his gold spectacles clinging to his finely chiselled nose, his thoughtful face bending over his book, you would conclude that you had interrupted some savant, and bow yourself out.

But you must ring his bell at night — say two o'clock A. M.; catch his cheery voice calling through the tube from his bedroom in the rear — "Yes; coming right away — be there soon as I get my clothes on" — feel the strength and sympathy and readiness to help in the man, and try to keep step with him as he hurries on, and then watch him when he enters the sick-room, diffusing hope and cheer and confidence, and listen to the soft, soothing tones of his voice, before you really get at the inside lining of "Doc" Shipman.

All this brings me to the story. Of course, I could have told you the bare facts without giving you an idea of the man and his surroundings, but that would n't be fair to you, for you would have missed knowing the Doctor, and I the opportunity of introducing him to you.

We were sitting in the old-fashioned office, then, one snowy night in January, the Doctor leaning back in his chair, his meerschaum pipe

in his mouth — the one with the gold cap that a long-ago patient gave him — when he straightened his back and tugged at his fob, bringing to the surface a small gold watch — one I had not seen before.

"Where 's the silver one?" I asked, referring to an old silver-backed watch I had seen him wear.

The Doctor looked up and smiled.

"That 's in the drawer. I don't wear it any more — not since I got this one back."

"What happened? Was it broken?"

"No, stolen."

"When?"

"Oh, some time ago. Help yourself to a cigar and I 'll tell you about it.

"One night last summer I came in late, took off my coat and vest, hung them on a chair by the window and went to bed, leaving the sashes ajar, for it was terribly hot and I wanted a draught of air through from my bedroom."

(I must tell my reader here that the Doctor is a born story-teller and something of an actor as well. He seldom explains his characters or situations as he goes on by putting in "I said" and "he said" and similar expressions. You know by the tones of his voice who is speaking, and his gestures supply the rest.)

"I always carried this watch in my vest pocket. I carry it now inside my waistband so they will have to pull me to pieces to get it.

"Well, about three o'clock in the morning — I had just heard the old clock in the tower strike, and was dozing off to sleep again — a footstep awoke me to consciousness. I looked through these doors"— here the Doctor was pointing to the folding doors of the office where we sat — "and through my bedroom saw the dim outline of a man moving about this room. He had my vest and trousers over his arm. I sprang up, but he was too quick for me, and before I could reach him he had slipped through the windows out on to the porch, down the yard, through the gate, and was gone.

"With him went my mother's watch, which was in the upper vest pocket, and some fifty dollars in money. I did n't mind the money, but I did the watch. It was my mother's, a present from my father when they were first married, and had the initials '*E. M. S. from J. H. S.*' engraved on the under side of the case. When she died I pasted the dear old lady's photograph inside the upper lid. I know almost everybody around here, and they all know me; they come in here with broken heads for me to sew up, and stab wounds, any

such-like misfortunes, and when they heard what had happened to me they all did what they could.

"The Captain of the precinct came around, and everybody was very sorry, and they hunted the pawnshops, and I offered a reward — in fact, did all the foolish things you do when you have lost something you think a heap of. But no trace of the watch could be found, and so I gave it up and tried to forget it and could n't. That 's why I bought that cheap silver one. My only clew to the thief was the glimpse I had of a scar on his cheek and a slight dragging of his foot as he stepped about my room.

"One night last autumn there came a ring at the bell, and I let in a man with a slouch hat pulled over his eyes and the collar of his coat turned up. He was soaking wet, the water oozing from his shoes and slopping the oilcloth in the hall where he stood. I had never seen him before.

"'Doc,' he said, 'I want you.' They all call me 'Doc' around here — especially this kind of a man — and I saw right away where he belonged.

"'What for?'

"'My pal 's sick.'

"'What 's the matter with him?'

"'Well, he 's sick— took bad. He 'll die if he don't git help.'

"'Where is he?'

"'Down in Washington Street.'

"'Queer,' I said to myself, 'his wanting me to go two miles from here, when there are plenty of doctors nearer by,' and so I said to him: —

"'You can get a doctor nearer than me. I 'm waiting for a woman case and may be sent for any minute. Try the Dispensary on Canal Street; they 've always a doctor there.'

"'No — we don't want no Dispensary sharp. We want you. Pal's sent me for you — he knows you, but you might n't remember him.'

"'I 'll go.' These are the people I can never refuse. They are on the hunted side of life and don't have many friends. I slipped on my rubbers and coat, picked up my umbrella and my bag with my instruments in it; hung a card in the window so the hall-light would strike it, marked 'Back in an hour' — in case the woman sent for me; locked my door and started after him.

"It was an awful night. The streets were running rivers, the wind rattling the shutters and flattening the umbrellas of everybody who tried to carry one — one of those storms that drives straight at the front of the house, drench-

ing it from chimney to sidewalk. We waited under the gas-lamp, boarded a Sixth Avenue car, and got out at a signal from my companion. During the trip he sat in the far corner of the car, his hat slouched over his eyes, his coat-collar covering his ears. He evidently did not want to be recognized.

"If you know the neighborhood about Washington Street you know it 's the last resort of the hunted. When they want to hide, they burrow under one of these rookeries. That 's where the police look for them, only they 've got so many holes they can't stop them all. Captain Packett of the Ninth Precinct told me the other day that he 'd rather hunt a rattlesnake in a tiger's cage than go open-handed into some of the rookeries around Washington Street. I am never afraid in these places ; a doctor 's like a Sister of Charity or a hospital nurse — they 're safe anywhere. I don't believe that other fellow would have stolen my watch if he had known I was a doctor.

"When we left the car at Canal Street, my companion whispered to me to follow him, no matter where he went. We kept along close to the houses, past the dives — the streets, even here, were almost deserted ; then I saw him drop down a cellarway. I followed, through long passages, up a creaking pair of stairs, along a deserted cor-

ridor — only one gas-jet burning — up a second flight of stairs and into an empty room, the door of which he opened with a key which he held in his hand. He waited until I passed in, locked the door behind us, felt his way to a window, the glow of some lights in the tenements opposite giving the only light in the room, and raised the sash. Then down a fire-escape, across a wooden bridge, which was evidently used to connect the two buildings; through an open door, and up another stairs. At the end of this last corridor my companion pushed open a door.

"'Here 's the "Doc,"' I heard him say.

"I looked into a room about as big as this we sit in. It was filled with men, most of them on the floor with their backs to the wall. There was a cot in one corner, and a pine table on which stood a cheap kerosene lamp, and one or two chairs. The only other furniture were a flour-barrel and a dry-goods box. On top of the barrel was a tin coffee-pot, a china cup, and half a loaf of bread. Against the window — there was but one — was tacked a ragged calico quilt, shutting out air and light. Flat on the floor, where the light of the lamp fell on his face, lay a man dressed only in his trousers and undershirt. The shirt was clotted with blood; so were the mattress under him and the floor.

"'Shot?' I asked of the man nearest me.

"'Yes.'

"I knelt down on the floor beside him and opened his shirt. The wound was just above the heart; the bullet had struck a rib, missed the lungs, and gone out at the back. Dangerous, but not necessarily fatal.

"The man turned his head and opened his eyes. He was a stockily built fellow of thirty with a clean-shaven face.

"'Is that you, "Doc"?'

"'Yes; where does it hurt?'

"'"Doc" Shipman — who used to be at Bellevue five or six years ago?'

"'Yes — now tell me where the pain is.'

"'Let me look at you. Yes — that 's him. That 's the "Doc," boys. Where does it hurt? — Oh, all around here — back worst' — and he passed his hand over his side.

"I looked him over again, put in a few stitches, and fixed him up for the night. When I had finished he said, —

"'Come closer, "Doc"; am I going to die?'

"'No, not this time; you 'll pull through. Close shave, but you 'll weather it. But you want some air. Here, you fellows' — and I motioned to two men leaning against the quilt

tacked over the window—'rip that off and open that window. He 's got to breathe — too many of you in here, anyway.'

"One of the men moved the lidless dry-goods box against the wall, picked up the kerosene lamp and placed it inside, smothering its light; the other tore the lower end of the quilt from the sash, letting in the fresh, wet night air.

"I turned to the wounded man again.

"'You say you 've seen me before?'

"'Yes, once. You sewed this up' — and he held up his arm showing a healed scar. 'You 've forgot it, but I have n't.'

"'Where?'

"'Bellevue. They took me in there. You treated me white. That 's why my pal hunted you up. Say, Bill,' — and he called to my companion with the slouch hat, — 'pay the "Doc."'

"Half a dozen men dove instantly into their pockets, but my companion already had his roll of bills in his hand. He bent over so that the glow of the half-smothered lamp could fall upon his hand, unrolled a twenty-dollar bill, and handed it to me.

"I passed it back to him. 'I don't want this. Five dollars is my fee. If you have n't any-

thing smaller, wait till I come to-morrow, then you can give me a ten. I 'm ready to go now; lead the way out.'

"Next morning I went to see him again. Bill, by arrangement, met me at the corner of the street and took me to the wounded man's room, in and out, by the same route we had taken the night before. I found he had passed a good night, had no fever, and was all right. I left some medicine and directions, got my ten dollars, and never went again.

"Last month, some two days before Christmas, I was sitting here reading — it was after twelve o'clock — when I heard a tap on the window-pane. I pushed aside the shade and looked out. A thick-set man motioned me to open the door. When he got inside the hall he said, —

"'Ain't forgot me again, have you, "Doc"?'

"'No, you 're the man I fixed up in Washington Street last fall.'

"'Yes, that 's right, "Doc"; that 's me. Can I come in? I got something for you.'

"I brought him in and he sat down on that sofa. Then he pulled out a package from his inside pocket.

"'"Doc,"' he began, 'I was thinking to-night of what you done for me and how you did

it, and how decent you 've been about it always, and I thought maybe you would n't feel offended if I brought you this bunch of scarfpins to take your pick from'—and he unwrapped the bundle. 'There 's a pearl one — that might please you — and here 's another that sparkles — take your pick, "Doc." It would please me a heap if you would' — and he handed me half a dozen scarfpins stuck in a flannel rag — some of them of great value.

"I didn't know what to say at first. I could n't get mad. I saw he was in dead earnest, and I saw, too, that it was pure gratitude on his part that prompted him to do it. That 's a kind of human feeling you don't want to crush out in a man. When he 's got that, no matter what else he lacks, you 've got something to build on. I pulled out the pearl pin from the others. I wanted to get time to make up my mind as to what I really ought to do.

"'Very nice pin,' I said.

"'Yes, I thought so. I got it on a Sixth Avenue car. Maybe you 'll like the gold one better; take your pick, it 's all the same to me. That one you 've got in your hand is a good one.' I was slowly looking them over, making up my mind how I would refuse them and not hurt his feelings.

"'How did you get this one?' I asked, holding up the pearl pin.

"'I picked it up outside Cooper Union.'

"'On the sidewalk?'

"'No, from a feller's scarf. I held the cab door for him.' He spoke exactly as if he had been a collector who had been roaming the world for coins. 'Take 'em both, "Doc"—or all of 'em—I mean it.'

"I laid the bundle on the table and said: 'Well, that 's very kind of you and I don't want you to think I don't appreciate it—but you see I don't wear scarfpins, and if I did I don't think I ought to take these. You see we have two different professions—you 've got yours and I've got mine. I saw off men's legs, or I help them through a spell of sickness. They pay me for it in money. You 've got another way of making your living. Your patients are whoever you happen to meet. I might n't like your way of doing, and you might n't like mine. That 's a matter of opinion, or, perhaps, of education. You 've got your risks to run, and I 've got mine. If I cut too deep and kill a man they can shut me up—just as they can if you get into trouble. But I don't think we ought to mix up the proceeds. You would n't want me to give you this five-dollar bill'—and I held up a note

a patient had just paid me — 'and therefore I don't see how I ought to take one of your pins. I may not have made it plain to you — but it strikes me that way.'

"'Then you ain't mad 'cause I brought 'em?' — and he looked at me searchingly from under his dark eyebrows, his lips firmly set.

"'No, I 'm very grateful to you for wanting to give them to me — only I don't see my way clear to take them.'

"He settled back on the sofa and began twirling his hat with his hand. Then he rose from his seat, a shade of disappointment on his face, and said, slowly, —

"'Well, "Doc," ain't there something else I *can* do for you? Man like you must have *something* you want — something you can't get without somebody's help. Think, now — you might n't see me again.'

"Instantly I thought of my mother's watch.

"'Yes, there is. Somebody came along one night when I was asleep and borrowed my vest hanging over that chair by the window, and my trousers, and my mother's watch was in the vest pocket. If you could help me get that back you would do me a real service — one I would n't forget.'

"'What kind of a watch?'

"I described it closely, its inscription, the portrait of my mother in the case, and showed him a copy of her photograph — like the one here. Then I gave him as close a description of the man as I could.

"When I had described the scar on his face he looked at me in surprise. When I added that he had a slight limp, he said, quickly, —

"'Short man — with close-cropped hair — and a swipe across his chin. Lost a toe, and stumbles when he walks. I 'll see what I can do. He ain't one of our men. He comes from Chicago. He never stays more 'n a day or two in any town. Don't none of 'em know him round here. Leave it to me; may take some time — see you in a day or two' — and he went out.

"I did n't see him for a month — not until two nights ago. He did n't ring the bell this time. He came in through the window. I thought the catch was down, but it was n't. Funny how quick these fellows can see a thing. As soon as he shut the glass sash behind him he drew the curtains close; then he turned down the gas. All this, mind you, before he had opened his mouth. Then he said, —

"'Anybody here but you?'

"'No.'

"'Sure?'

"'Yes, very sure.'

"He spoke in a husky, rasping voice, like a man who had caught his breath again after a long run.

"He turned his back to the window, slipped his hand in his hip-pocket, and pulled out my mother's watch.

"'Is that it, "Doc"?'

"The light was pretty low, but I'd have known it in the dark.

"'Yes, of course it is'—and I opened the lid in search of the old lady's photo. 'Where did you get it?'

"'Look again. There ain't no likeness.'

"'No, but here are the marks where they scraped it off'—and I held it close to his eyes. 'Where did you get it?'

"'Don't ask no questions, "Doc." I had some trouble gittin' next the goods, and maybe it ain't over yet. I'll know in the morning. If anybody asks you anything about it, you ain't lost no watch—see? Last time you seen me I was goin' West, see—don't forget that. That's all, "Doc." If you're pleased, I'm satisfied.'

"He held out his hand to say good-by, but I would n't take it. His appearance, the tone of

his voice, and his hunted look made me a little nervous.

"'Sit down. You 'll let me pay you for it, won't you? Wait until I go back in my bedroom for some money.'

"'No, "Doc," you can't pay me a cent. I 'm sorry they got the mother's picture, but I could n't catch up with the goods before. That would have been the best part of it for me. Mothers is scarce now — kind you and me had — dead or alive. You won't mind if I turn out the gas while I slip out, do you, and you won't mind either if I ask you to sit still here. Somebody might see you' — and he shook my hand and started for the window. As his hand neared the latch I could see in the dim light that his movements were unsteady. Once he stumbled and clutched at the bookcase for support —

"'Hold on,' I said — and I walked rapidly toward him — 'don't go yet — you are not well.'

"He leaned against the bookcase and put his hand to his side.

"I was alongside of him now, my arm under his, guiding him into a chair.

"'Are you faint?'

"'Yes — got a drop of anything, "Doc"? That 's all I want. It ain't nothing.'

"I opened my closet, took out a bottle of brandy and poured some into a measuring-glass. He drank it, leaned his head for an instant against my arm, and, with the help of my hand slipped under his armpit, again struggled to his feet.

"When I withdrew my hand it was covered with blood. It was too dark to see the color, but I knew from the sticky feeling of it just what it was.

"'My God! man,' I cried; 'you are hurt, your shirt's all bloody. Come back here until I can see what's the matter.'

"'No, "Doc"—*no!* I tell you. It's stopped bleeding now. It would be tough for you if they pinched me here. Keep away, I tell you—I ain't got a minute to lose. I did n't want to hurt him even after he gave me this one in my back, but his girl was wearing it and there warn't no other way. Git behind them curtains, "Doc." So! Good-by.'

"And he was gone."

PLAIN FIN — PAPER-HANGER

I

THE man was a little sawed-off, red-headed Irishman, with twinkling, gimlet eyes, two upcurved lips always in a broad smile, and a pair of thin, caliper-shaped legs.

His name was as brief as his stature.

"Fin, your honor, by the grace of God. F-i-n, Fin. There was a 'Mac' in front of it once, and an 'n' to the tail of it in the old times, so me mother says, but some of me ancisters — bad cess to 'em! — wiped 'em out. Plain Fin, if you plase, sor."

The punt was the ordinary Thames boat: a long, narrow, flat-bottomed, shallow craft with tapering ends decked over to serve as seats, the whole propelled by a pole the size of a tight-rope dancer's and about as difficult to handle.

Chartering the punt had been easy. All I had had to do was to stroll down the path bordering the river, run my eye over a group of boats lying side by side like a school of trout with their noses upstream, pick out the widest, flattest, and least upsettable craft in the fleet, decorate it with a

pair of Turkey-red cushions from a pile in the boat-house, and a short mattress, also Turkey-red — a good thing at luncheon hour for a tired back is a mattress — slip the key of the padlock of the mooring-chain in my pocket, and stroll back again.

The hiring of the man for days after my arrival at Sonning-on-Thames, was more difficult, well-nigh impossible, except at a price per diem which no staid old painter — they are all an impecunious lot — could afford. There were boys, of course, for the asking; sunburnt, freckle-faced, tousle-headed, barefooted little devils who, when my back was turned, would do handsprings over my cushions, landing on the mattress, or break the pole the first day out, leaving me high and dry on some island out of calling distance; but full-grown, sober-minded, steady men, who could pole all day or sit beside me patiently while I worked, hand me the right brush or tube of color, or palette, or open a bottle of soda without spilling half of it — that kind of man was scarce.

Landlord Hull, of the White Hart Inn — what an ideal Boniface is this same Hull, and what an ideal inn — promised a boatman to pole the punt and look after my traps when the Henley regatta was over; and the owner of my own craft, and of fifty other punts besides, went so far as to say

that he expected a man as soon as Lord Somebody-or-Other left for the Continent, when his lordship's waterman would be free, adding, meaningly: —

"Just at present, zur, when we do be 'avin' sich a mob lot from Lunnon, 'specially at week's-end, zur, we ain't got men enough to do our own polin'. It 's the war, zur, as has took 'em off. Maybe for a few day, zur, ye might take a 'and yerself if ye did n't mind."

I waved the hand referred to — the forefinger part of it — in a deprecating manner. I could n't pole the lightest and most tractable punt ten yards in a straight line to save my own or anybody else's life. Then again, if I should impair the precision of my five fingers by any such violent exercise, my brush would wabble as nervously over my canvas as a recording needle across a steam-gauge. Poling a rudderless, keelless skiff up a crooked stream by means of a fifteen-foot balancing pole is an art only to be classed with that of rowing a gondola. Gondoliers and punters, like poets, are born, not made. My own Luigi comes of a race of gondoliers dating back two hundred years, and punters must spring from just such ancestors. No, if I had to do the poling myself, I should rather get out and walk.

Fin solved the problem — not from any special training (rowing in regattas and the like), but rather from that universal adaptability of the Irishman which fits him for filling any situation in life, from a seat on a dirt-cart to a chair in an aldermanic chamber.

"I am a paper-hanger by trade, sor," he began, "but I was brought up on the river and can put a punt wid the best. Try me, sor, at four bob a day; I 'm out of a job."

I looked him over, from his illuminated head down to his parenthetical legs, caught the merry twinkle in his eyes, and a sigh of relief escaped me.

Here was not only a seafaring man, accustomed to battling with the elements, skilled in the handling of poles, and acquainted with swift and ofttimes dangerous currents, but a brother brush, a man conversant with design and pigments; an artist, keenly sensitive to straight lines, harmony of tints, and delicate manipulation of surfaces.

I handed him the key at once. Thenceforward I was simply a passenger depending on his strong right arm for guidance, and at luncheon hour upon his alert and nimble, though slightly incurved, legs for sustenance, the inn being often a mile away from my subject.

And the inns! — or rather my own particular inn — the White Hart at Sonning.

There are others, of course — the Red Lion at Henley; the old Warboys hostelry at Cookham; the Angler at Marlowe; the French Horn across the black water and within rifle-shot of the White Hart — a most pretentious place, designed for millionaires and spendthrifts, where even chops and tomato-sauce, English pickles, chow-chow and the like, ales in the wood and other like commodities and comforts, are dispensed at prices that compel all impecunious, staid painters like myself to content themselves with a sandwich and a pint of bitter — and a hundred other inns along the river, good, bad, and indifferent. But yet with all their charms I am still loyal to my own White Hart.

Mine is an inn that sets back from the river with a rose-garden in front the like of which you never saw nor smelt of: millions of roses in a never-ending bloom. An inn with low ceilings, a cubby-hole of a bar next the side entrance on the village street; two barmaids — three on holidays; old furniture; a big fireplace in the hall; red-shaded lamps at night; plenty of easy-chairs and cushions. An inn all dimity and cretonne and brass bedsteads upstairs and unlimited tubs — one fastened to the wall painted white, and

about eight feet long, to fit the largest pattern of Englishman. Out under the portico facing the rose-garden and the river stand tables for two or four, with snow-white cloths made gay with field-flowers, and the whole shaded by big, movable Japanese umbrellas, regular circus-tent umbrellas, their staffs stuck in the ground wherever they are needed. Along the sides of this garden on the gravel-walk loll go-to-sleep straw chairs, with little wicker tables within reach of your hand for B. & S., or tea and toast, or a pint in a mug, and down at the water's edge seafaring men like Fin and me find a boat-house with half a score of punts, skiffs, and rowboats, together with a steam launch with fires banked ready for instant service.

And the people in and about this White Hart Inn!

There are a bride and groom, of course. No well-regulated Thames inn can exist a week without a bride and groom. He is a handsome, well-knit, brown-skinned young fellow, who wears white flannel trousers, chalked shoes, a shrimp-colored flannel jacket and a shrimp-colored cap (Leander's colors) during the day, and a faultlessly cut dress-suit at night.

She has a collection of hats, some as big as small tea-tables; fluffy gowns for morning; short

frocks for boating; and a gold belt, two shoulder-straps, and a bunch of roses for dinner. They have three dogs between them — one four inches long — well, perhaps six, to be exact — another a bull terrier, and a third a St. Bernard as big as a Spanish burro. They have also a maid, a valet, and a dog-cart, besides no end of blankets, whips, rugs, canes, umbrellas, golf-sticks, and tennis-bats. They have stolen up here, no doubt, to get away from their friends, and they are having the happiest hours of their lives.

"Them two, sor," volunteers Fin, as we pass them lying under the willows near my morning subject, "is as chuck-full of happiness as a hive's full of bees. They was out in their boat yisterday, sor, in all that pour, and it rolled off 'em same as a duck sheds water, and they laughin' so ye 'd think they 'd split. What 's dresses to them, sor, and her father? Why, sor, he could buy and sell half Sonnin'. He 's jist home from Africa that chap is — or he was the week he was married — wid more lead inside him than would sink a corpse. You kin see for yerself that he 's made for fightin'. Look at the eye on him!"

Then there is the solitary Englishman, who breakfasts by himself, and has the morning

paper laid beside his plate the moment the post-cart arrives. Fin and I find him half the time on a bench in a cool place on the path to the Lock, his nose in his book, his tightly furled umbrella by his side. No dogs nor punts nor spins up the river for him. He is taking his holiday and does n't want to be meddled with or spoken to.

There are, too, the customary maiden sisters — the unattended and forlorn — up for a week; and the young fellow down from London, all flannels and fishing-rods — three or four of them in fact, who sit round in front of the little sliding wicket facing the row of bottles and pump-handles—divining-rods for the beer below, these pump-handles — chaffing the barmaids and getting as good as they send; and always, at night, one or more of the country gentry in for their papers, and who can be found in the cosey hall discussing the crops, the coming regatta, the chance of Leander's winning the race, or the latest reports of yesterday's cricket-match.

Now and then the village doctor or miller—quite an important man is the miller—you would think so if you could see the mill — drops in, draws up a chair, and ventures an opinion on the price of wheat in the States or the coal strike or some kindred topic, the coming country fair, or perhaps the sermon of the previous Sunday.

"I hope you 'eard our Vicar, sir—No? Sorry you did n't, sir. I tell yer 'e 's a nailer."

And so much for the company at the White Hart Inn.

II

You perhaps think that you know the Thames. You have been at Henley, no doubt, during regatta week, when both banks were flower-beds of blossoming parasols and full-blown picture-hats, the river a stretch of silver, crowded with boats, their occupants cheering like mad. Or you know Marlowe with its wide stream bordered with stately trees and statelier mansions, and Oxford with its grim buildings, and Windsor dominated by its huge pile of stone, the flag of the Empires floating from its top; and Maidenhead with its boats and launches, and lovely Cookham with its back water and quaint mill and quainter lock. You have rowed down beside them all in a shell, or have had glimpses of them from the train, or sat under the awnings of the launch or regular packet and watched the procession go by. All very charming and interesting, and, if you had but forty-eight hours in which to see all England, a profitable way of spending eight of them. And yet you have only skimmed the beautiful river's surface as a swallow skims a lake.

Try a punt once.

Pole in and out of the little back waters, lying away from the river, smothered in trees; float over the shallows dotted with pond-lilies; creep under drooping branches swaying with the current; stop at any one of a hundred landings, draw your boat up on the gravel, spring out and plunge into the thickets, flushing the blackbirds from their nests, or unpack your luncheon, spread your mattress, and watch the clouds sail over your head. Don't be in a hurry. Keep up this idling day in and day out, up and down, over and across, for a month or more, and you will get some faint idea of how picturesque, how lovely, and how restful this rarest of all the sylvan streams of England can be.

If, like me, you can't pole a punt its length without running into a mud-bank or afoul of the bushes, then send for Fin. If he isn't at Sonning you will hear of him at Cookham or Marlowe or London—but find him wherever he is. He will prolong your life and loosen every button on your waistcoat. Fin is the unexpected, the ever-bubbling, and the ever-joyous; restless as a schoolboy ten minutes before recess, quick as a grasshopper and lively as a cricket. He is, besides, brimful and spilling over with a quality of fun that is geyser-like in its spontaneity and inter-

mittent flow. When he laughs, which he does every other minute, the man ploughing across the river, or the boy fishing, or the girl driving the cow, turn their heads and smile. They can't help it. In this respect he is better than a dozen farmers, each with his two blades of grass. Fin plants a whole acre of laughs at once.

On one of my joyous days — they were all joyous days, this one most of all — I was up the back-water, the "Mud Lark" (Fin's name for the punt) anchored in her element by two poles, one at each end, to keep her steady, when Fin broke through a new aperture and became reminiscent.

I had dotted in the outlines of the old footpath with the meadows beyond, the cotton-wool clouds sailing overhead — only in England do I find these clouds — and was calling to the restless Irishman to sit still or I would send him ashore . . . wet, when he answered with one of his bubbling outbreaks : —

"I don't wonder yer hot, sor, but I git that fidgety. I been so long doin' nothin'; two months now, sor, since I been on a box."

I worked on for a minute without answering. Hanging wall-paper by standing on a box was probably the way they did it in the country, the ceilings being low.

"No work?" I said, aimlessly. As long as he kept still I did n't care what he talked or laughed about.

"Plinty, sor — an' summer 's the time to do it. So many strangers comin' an' goin', but they won't let me at it. I 'm laid off for a month yet; that 's why your job come in handy, sor."

"Row with your Union?" I remarked, listlessly, my mind still intent on watching a sky tint above the foreground trees.

"No — wid the perlice. A little bit of a scrimmage wan night in Trafalgar Square. It was me own fault, sor, for I oughter 'a' knowed better. It was about three o'clock in the mornin', sor, and I was outside one o' them clubs just below Piccadilly, when one o' them young chaps come out wid three or four others, all b'ilin' drunk — one was Lord Bentig — jumps into a four-wheeler standin' by the steps an' hollers out to the rest of us: 'A guinea to the man that gits to Trafalgar Square fust; three minutes' start,' and off he wint and we after him, leavin' wan of the others behind wid his watch in his hand."

I laid down my palette and looked up. Paperhanging evidently had its lively side.

"Afoot?"

"All four of 'em, sor — lickety-split and hell's loose. I come near runnin' over a bobbie as I

turned into Pall Mall, but I dodged him and kep' on and landed second, with the mare doubled up in a heap and the rig a-top of her and one shaft broke. Lord Bentig and the other chaps that was wid him was standin' waitin', and when we all fell in a heap he nigh bu'st himself a-laughin'. He went bail for us, of course, and give the three of us ten bob apiece, but I got laid off for three months, and come up here, where me old mother lives and I kin pick up a job."

"Hanging paper?" I suggested with a smile.

"Yes, or anything else. Ye see, sor, I 'm handy carpenterin', or puttin' on locks, or the likes o' that, or paintin', or paper-hangin', or mendin' stoves or tinware. So when they told me a painter chap wanted me, I looked over me perfessions and picked out the wan I tho't would suit him best. But it 's drivin' a cab I 'm good at; been on the box fourteen year come next Christmas. Ye don't mind, do ye, sor, my not tellin' ye before? Lord Bentig'll tell ye all about me next time ye see him in Lunnon." This touch was truly Finian. "He's cousin, ye know, sor, to this young chap what's here at the inn wid his bride. They would n't know me, sor, nor don't, but I 've driv her father many a time. My rank used to be near his house on Bolton Terrace. I had a thing happen there one night

that — more water? Yes, sor — and the other brush — the big one? Yes, sor — thank ye, sor. I don't shake, do I, sor?"

"No, Fin; go on."

"Well, I was tellin' ye about the night Sir Henry's man — that 's the lady's father, sor — come to the rank where I sat on me box. It was about ten o'clock — rainin' hard and bad goin', it was that slippery.

"'His lordship wants ye in a hurry, Fin,' and he jumped inside.

"When I got there I see something was goin' on — a party or something — the lights was lit clear up to the roof.

"'His lordship 's waitin' in the hall for ye,' said his man, and I jumped off me box and wint inside.

"'Fin,' said his lordship, speakin' low, 'there 's a lady dinin' wid me and the wine 's gone to her head, and she 's that full that if she waits until her own carriage comes for her she won't git home at all! Go back and get on yer cab wid yer fingers to yer hat, and I 'll bring her out and put her in meself. It's dark and she won't know the difference. Take her down to Cadogan Square — I don't know the number, but ye can't miss it, for it 's the fust white house wid geraniums in the winders. When ye git there

ye 're to git down, help her up the steps, keepin' yer mouth shut, unlock the door, and set her down on the sofa. You 'll find the sofa in the parlor on the right, and can't miss it. Then lay the key on the mantel — here it is. After she 's down, step out softly, close the door behind ye, ring the bell, and some of her servants will come and put her to bed. She 's often took that way and they know what to do.' Then he says, lookin' at me straight, 'I sent for you, Fin, for I know I kin trust ye. Come here to-morrow and let me know how she got through and I 'll give ye five bob.'

"Well, sor, in a few minutes out she come, leanin' on his lordship's arm, steppin' loike she had spring-halt, and takin' half the sidewalk to turn in.

"'Good-night, your ladyship,' says his lordship.

"'Good-night, Sir Henry,' she called back, her head out of the winder, and off I driv.

"I turned into the Square, found the white house wid the geraniums, helps her out of me cab and steadied her up the steps, pulled the key out, and was just goin' to put it in the lock when she fell up agin the door and open it went. The gas was turned low in the hall, so that she would n't know me if she looked at me.

"I found the parlor, but the lights were out; so widout lookin' for the sofa — I was afraid somebody 'd come and catch me — I slid her into a rockin'-chair, laid the key on the hall table, shut the door soft-like, rang the bell as if there was a fire next door, jumped on me box, and driv off.

"The next mornin' I went to see his lordship.

"'Did ye land her all right, Fin?'

"'I did, sor,' I says.

"'Had ye any trouble wid the key?'

"'No, sor,' I says, 'the door was open.'

"'That 's queer,' he says; 'maybe her husband came in earlier and forgot to shut it. And ye put her on the sofa' —

"'No, sor, in a big chair.'

"'In the parlor on the right?'

"'No, sor, in a little room on the left — down one step' —

"He stopped and looked at me.

"'Ye 're sure ye put her in the fust white house?'

"'I am, sor.'

"'Wid geraniums in the winder?'

"'Yes, sor.'

"'Red?' he says.

"'No, white,' I says.

"'On the north side of the Square?'

"'No,' I says, 'on the south.'

"'My God! Fin,' he says, 'ye left her in the wrong house!'"

It was I who shook the boat this time.

"Oh, ye need n't laugh, sor; it was no laughin' matter. I got me five bob, but I lost his lordship's custom, and I did n't dare go near Cadogan Square for a month."

These disclosures opened up a new and wider horizon. Heretofore I had associated Fin with simple country life — as a cheery craftsman — a Jack-of-all-trades: one day attired in overalls, with paste-pot, shears, and ladder, brightening the walls of the humble cottagers, and the next in polo cap and ragged white sweater, the gift of some summer visitor (his invariable costume with me), adapting himself to the peaceful needs of the river. Here, on the contrary and to my great surprise, was a cosmopolitan; a man versed in the dark and devious ways of a great city; familiar with life in its widest sense; one who had touched on many sides and who knew the cafés, the rear entrances to the theatres, and the short cut to St. John's Wood with the best and worst of them. These discoveries came with a certain shock, but they did not impair my interest in my companion. They really endeared him to me all the more.

After this I was no longer content with listening to his rambling dissertations on whatever happened to rise in his memory and throat. I began to direct the output. It was not a difficult task; any incident or object, however small, served my purpose.

The four-inch dog acted as valve this morning.

Somebody had trodden on His Dogship; some unfortunate biped born to ill luck. In and about Sonning to tread on a dog or to cause any animal unnecessary pain is looked upon as an unforgivable crime. Dogs are made to be hugged and coddled and given the best cushion in the boat. "A man, a girl, and a dog" is as common as "a man, a punt, and an inn."

Instantly the four-inch morsel — four inches, now that I think of it, is about right; six inches is too long — this morsel, I say, gave a yell as shrill as a launch whistle and as fetching as a baby's cry. Instantly three chambermaids, two barmaids, the two maiden sisters who were breakfasting on the shady side of the inn gable, and the dog's owner, who, in a ravishing gown, was taking her coffee under one of the Japanese umbrellas, came rushing out of their respective hiding-places, impelled by an energy and accom-

panied by an impetuousness rarely seen except perhaps in some heroic attempt to save a drowning child sinking for the last time.

"The darlin'" — this from Katy the barmaid, who reached him first — "who 's stomped on him?"

"How outrageous to be so cruel!" — this from the two maiden sisters.

"Give him to me, Katy — oh, the brute of a man!" — this from the fair owner.

The solitary Englishman with his book and his furled umbrella, who in his absorption had committed the crime, strode on without even raising his hat in apology.

"D——d little beast!" I heard him mutter as he neared the boat-house where Fin and I were stowing cargo. "Ought to be worn on a watch-chain or in her buttonhole."

Fin had his hand on his lips keeping his laughing apparatus in order until the solitary disappeared down the path to the trees, then he leaned my way.

"I know him, sor," he whispered. "He 's a barrister down in Temple Bar. He don't remember me, sor, but I know him. He 's always treadin' on something — something alive — always, sor, and wid both feet! He trod on me once. I thought it was him when I see him fust — but

I was n't sure till I asked Landlord Hull about him."

"How came you to know him?"

"Well, sor, he had an old lady on his list two years ago that was always disputin' distances and goin' to law about her cab fares. I picked her up one day in St. James Street and druv her to Kensington Gardens and charged her the rates, and she kicked and had me up before the magistrate, and this old ink-bottle appeared for her. She 's rich and always in hot water. Well, we had it measured and I was right, and it cost her me fare and fifteen bob besides. When it was figured up she owed me sixpence more measurement I had n't charged her for the first time, and I summoned her and made her pay it and twelve bob more to teach her manners. What pay he got I don't know, but I got me sixpence. He was born back here about a mile — that 's why he comes here for his holiday."

Fin stopped stowing cargo — two bottles of soda, a piece of ice in a bucket, two canvases, my big easel and a lunch-basket — and moving his cap back from his freckled forehead said, with as much gravity as he could maintain, —

"I ought to have been a barrister, sor ; I started as one."

The statement did not surprise me. Had he

added that he had coached the winning crew of the regatta the year before, laid the marquetry floors of Clarendon (not far away), or led the band at the late Lord Mayor's show, I should have received his statements with equal equanimity. So I simply remarked, "When was that, Fin?" quite as I should had I been gathering details for his biography — my only anxiety being to get the facts chronologically correct.

"When I was a gossoon of twenty, sor, — maybe eighteen, — I'm fifty now, so it's far back enough, God knows. And it all happened, too, not far from that old ink-bottle's place in Temple Bar. I was lookin' at it wan day last winter when I had a fare down there that I took up in old Bond Street. I did the sweepin' out and startin' fires. Wan day wan of the clerks got fired because he couldn't serve a writ on another barrister chap who owed a bill that me boss was tryin' to collect. Nobody could git into his rooms, try every way they could. He had nigh broke the head o' wan o' the young fellers in the office who tried it the day before. He never come out, but had his grub sent him. This had been goin' on for a month. All kinds o' games had been put up on him and he beat 'em all.

"'I'll do it,' I says, 'in a week's time or

less.' The manager was goin' through the office and heard the laugh they give me. 'What's this?' he says, cross like. 'Fin says he kin serve the writ,' the clerk says. 'I kin,' I says, startin' up, 'or I 'll throw up me job.'

"'Give him the writ,' he says, 'and give him two days off. It kin do no harm for him to try.'

"Well, I found the street, and went up the stairs and read the name on the door and heard somebody walkin' around, and knew he was in. Then I lay around on the other side o' the street to see what I could pick up in the way o' the habits o' the rat. I knew he could n't starve for a week at a time, and that something must be goin' in, and maybe I could follow up and git me foot in the door before he could close it; but I soon found that would n't work. Pretty soon a can o' milk come and went up in a basket that he let down from his winder. As he leaned out I saw his head, and it was a worse carrot than me own. Then along come a man with a bag o' coal on his back and a bit o' card in his hand with the coal-yard on it and the rat's name underneath, a-lookin' up at the house and scratchin' his head as to where he was goin'.

"I crossed over and says, 'Who are ye lookin' for?' And he hands me the card. 'I 'm his

man,' I says, 'and I been waitin' for ye — me master's sick and don't want no noise, and if ye make any I 'll lose me place. I 'll carry the bag up and dump it and bring ye the bag back and a shillin' for yer trouble. Wait here. Hold on,' I says; 'take me hat and let me have yours, for I don't git a good hat every day, and the bag's that dirty it 'll spile it.'

"'Go on,' he says; 'I 've carried it all the way from the yard and me back 's broke.' Well, I pulled his hat over me eyes and started up the stairs wid the bag on me shoulder. When I got to the fust landin' I run me hands over the bag, gittin' 'em good and black, then I smeared me face, and I went another flight.

"'Who 's there?' he says, when I knocked.

"'Coals,' I says.

"'Where from?' he says.

"I told him the name on the card. He opened the door an inch and I could see a chain between the crack.

"'Let me see yer face,' he says. I twisted it out from under the edge of the bag. 'All right,' he says, and he slipped back the chain and in I went, stoopin' down as if it weighed a ton.

"'Where 'll I put it?' I says.

"'In the box,' he says, walkin' toward the grate. 'Have ye brought the bill?'

"'I have,' I says, still keepin' me head down. 'It's in me side pocket. Pull it out, please, me hand 's that dirty '— and out come the writ!

"Ye ought to have seen his face when he read it. He made a jump for the door, but I got there fust and downstairs in a tumble, and fell in a heap at the foot with everything he could lay his hands on comin' after me — tongs, shovel, and poker.

"I got a raise of five bob when I went back and ten bob besides from the boss.

"I ought to have stayed at the law, sor; I 'd be a magistrate by now a-sittin' on a sheepskin instead of ——

"Where 'll I put this big canvas, sor — up agin the bow or laid flat? The last coat ain't dry yet," he muttered to himself, touching my picture with his finger in true paper-hanger style. "Oh, yes, I see — all ready, sor, ye kin step in. Same place we painted yesterday, sor? — up near the mill? All right, sor." And we pushed out into the stream.

These talks with Fin are like telephone messages from the great city hardly an hour away. They always take place in the open, while I am floating among pond-lilies or drifting under wide-spreading trees, their drooping leaves dab-

bring in the silent current like children's fingers, or while I am sitting under skies as blue as any that bend above my Beloved City by the Sea; often, too, when the delicious silence about me is broken only by the lapping of the water around my punt, the sharpening of a bit of charcoal, or the splash of a fish. That his stories are out of key with my surroundings, often reminding me of things I have come miles over the sea to forget, somehow adds to their charm.

There is no warning given. Suddenly, and apparently without anything that leads up to the subject in mind, this irrepressible Irishman breaks out, and before I am aware of the change, the glory of the morning and all that it holds for me of beauty has faded out of the slide of my mental camera and another has taken its place. Again I am following Fin's cab through the mazes of smoky, seething London, now waiting outside a concert-hall for some young blood, or shopping along Regent Street, or at full tilt to catch a Channel train at Charing Cross — each picture enriched by a running account of personal adventure that makes them doubly interesting.

"You would n't mind, sor," he begins, "if I tell ye of a party of three I took home from a grand ball — one of the toppy balls of the winter, in one o' them big halls on the Strand?

Two o' them was dressed like the Royal family in satins that stuck out like a haystack and covered with diamonds that would hurt your eyes to look at 'em" — And then in his inimitable dialect — impossible to reproduce by any combination of vowels at my command, and punctured every few minutes by ringing laughs that can be heard half a mile away — follows a description of how one of his fares, Ikey by name, the son of the stoutest of the women, by a sudden lurch of his cab — Ikey rode outside — while rounding into a side street, was landed in the mud.

"Oh, that was a great night, sor," he rattles on. "Ye ought to 'a' seen him when I picked him up. He looked as if they 'd been a-swobbin' the cobbles wid him. 'Oh, me son! me son! it 's kilt ye are!' she hollered out, clawin' him wid both hands, and up they hauled him all over them satin dresses! And where do ye think I took 'em, sor? To Hanover Square, or out by St. James Park? No, sor, not a bit of it! Down in an alley in Whitechapel, sor, that ye 'd be afraid to walk through after sundown, and into a shop wid three balls over it. What do ye think o' that, sor?"

Or he launches forth into an account of how he helped to rescue a woman's child from the

clutches of her brutal husband; and of the race out King's Road followed by the husband in a hansom, and of the watchful bobbie, who, to relieve a threatened block in the street, held up the pursuing hansom at the critical moment, thus saving the escaping child, half smothered in a blanket, tight locked in its mother's arms, and earning for Fin the biggest fare he ever got in his life.

"Think of it, sor! Fifteen bob for goin' a mile, she a-hollerin' all the time that she 'd double the fare if I kep' ahead. But, Lord love ye, sor, she need n't 'a' worried; me old plug had run in the Derby wance, and for a short spurt like that he was game back to the stump of his tail."

When the last morning of his enforced exile arrived and Fin, before I was half dressed, presented himself outside my bedroom door, an open letter in his hand, not a trace of the punt-poling Irishman was visible in his make-up!

He wore a glazed white tile, a yellow-brown coat with three capes, cut pen-wiper fashion, and a pair of corduroy trousers whose fulness concealed in part the ellipse of his legs.

"Here 's a letter from me boss, sor," he blurted out, holding it toward me. "He says

I kin go to work in the mornin'. Ye don't mind, do ye, sor?"

"Of course I mind, Fin; I'll have trouble to fill your place. Are you sorry to leave?"

"Am I sorry, sor? No! — savin' yer presence, I'm glad. What's the good of the country, anyhow, sor, except to make picters in? Of course, it's different wid you, sor, not knowin' the city, but for me — why God rest yer soul, sor, I would n't give one cobble of the Strand no bigger 'n me fist for the best farm in Surrey.

"Call me, sor, next time ye're passin' my rank — any time after twelve at night, and I'll show ye fun enough to last ye yer life."

Something dropped out of the landscape that day — something of its brilliancy, color, and charm. The water seemed sluggish, the sky-tones dull, the meadows flat and commonplace.

It must have been Fin's laugh!

LONG JIM

I

JIM met me at the station. I knew it was Jim when I caught sight of him loping along the platform, craning his neck, his head on one side as if in search of some one. He had the same stoop in his shoulders; the same long, disjointed, shambling body—six feet and more of it—that had earned him his soubriquet.

"Guess you be him," he said, recognizing me as easily, his face breaking suddenly into a broad smile as I stepped on to the platform. "Old man 'lowed I 'd know ye right away, but I kind o' mistrusted till I see ye stop and look 'raound same's if ye'd lost the trail. I'll take them traps and that bag if ye don't mind," and he relieved me of my sketch-kit and bag. "Buck-board 's right out here behind the freight shed," and he pointed across the track. "Old mare 's kinder skeery o' the engine, so I tied her a piece off."

He was precisely the man I had expected to find —even to his shaggy gray hair matted close

about his ears, wrinkled, leathery face, and long, scrawny neck. He wore the same rough, cowhide boots and the very hat I had seen so often reproduced — such a picturesque slouch of a hat with that certain cant to the rim which betokens long usage and not a little comfort, especially on balsam boughs with the sky for a covering, and only the stars to light one to bed.

I had heard all these several details and appointments described ever so minutely by an enthusiastic brother brush who had spent the preceding summer with old man Marvin — Jim's employer — but he had forgotten to mention, or had failed to notice, the peculiar softness of Jim's voice and his timid, shrinking eyes — the eyes of a dog rather than those of a man — not cowardly eyes, nor sneaking eyes — more the eyes of one who had suffered constantly from sudden, unexpected blows, and who shrank from your gaze and dodged it as does a hound that misunderstands a gesture.

"Old man 's been 'spectin' ye for a week," Jim rambled on as he led the way to the shed, hitching up his one leather suspender that kept the brown overalls snug up under his armpits. "P'raps ye expected him to meet ye," he continued, "but ye don't know him. He ain't that kind. He won't go even for Ruby."

"Who 's Ruby?" The brother brush had not mentioned him. "Mr. Marvin's son?"

"No, she 's Mother Marvin's girl. She's away to Plymouth to school. Stand here a minute till I back up the buck-board."

The buck-board is the only vehicle possible over these mountain roads. It is the *volante* of the Franconia range, and rides over everything from a bowlder to a wind-slash. This particular example differed only in being a trifle more rickety and mud-bespattered than any I had seen; and the mare had evidently been foaled to draw it —a fur-coated, moth-eaten, wisp-tailed beast, tied to the shafts with clothes-lines and scraps of deerhide — a quadruped that only an earthquake could have shaken into nervousness. And yet Jim backed her into position as carefully as if she had felt her harness for the first time, handing me the reins until he strapped my belongings to the hind axle, calling "Whoa, Bess!" every time she rested a tired muscle. Then he lifted one long leg over the dash-board and took the seat beside me.

It was my first draught of a long holiday; my breathing-spell; my time for loose neckties and flannel shirts and a kit slung over my shoulder crammed with brushes and color-tubes; my time for loafing and inviting my soul. It felt

inexpressibly delightful to be once more out in the open — out under the wide sweep of the sky; rid of the choke of narrow streets; exempt of bells, mails, and telegrams, and free of him who knocks, enters, and sits — and sits — and sits. And it was the Indian summer of the year; when the air is spicy with the smoke of burning leaves and the mountains are lost in the haze; when the unshaven cornfields are dotted with yellow pumpkins and under low-branched trees the apples lie in heaps; when the leaves are aflame and the round sun shines pink through opalescent clouds.

"Ain't it a hummer of a day?" Jim exclaimed, suddenly, looking toward the valley swimming in a silver mist below us. "By Jiminy! it makes a man feel like livin', don't it?"

I turned to look at him. He, too, seemed to have caught the infection. His shoulders had straightened, his nostrils were dilated like a deer's that sniffs some distant scent; his face was aglow. I began to wonder if, with my usual luck, I had not found the companion I always looked for in my outings — that rare other fellow of the right kind, who responds to your slightest wish with all the enthusiasm and gusto of a boy, and so vagabondish in his tendencies that

he is delighted to have you think for him and to follow your lead.

I had not long to wait. Before we had gone a mile into the forest Jim jerked the mare back upon her haunches and, pointing to a great hemlock standing sentinel over us, cried out with boyish enthusiasm: —

"Take a look at him once. Ain't he a ring-tailed roarer? Seems to me a tree big as him must be awful proud just o' bein' a tree. Ain't nothin' 'raound here kin see 's fur as he kin, anyways." "My luck again," I thought to myself. I knew I could not be mistaken in the outward signs.

"You like trees, then?" I asked, watching the glow on his face.

"Like 'em! Well, would n't you if ye 'd lived 'mong 'em long 's I have? Trees don't never go back on ye, and that 's what ye can't say o' everything." The analogy was obscure, but I attributed it to Jim's slender stock of phrases. "I've knowed that hemlock ever since I come here, and he 's just the same to me as the fust day I see him. Ain't never no change in trees; once they 're good to ye they 're allus good to ye. Birds is different — so is cattle — but trees and dogs ye kin tie to. Don't the woods smell nice? Do ye catch on to them

spruces dead ahead of us? Maybe ye can't smell 'em till ye git yer nose cleared out o' them city nosegays," he continued, with a kindly interest in his voice. "But ye will when ye 've been here a spell. Folks that live in cities think there ain't nothin' smells sweet but flowers and cologne. They ain't never slep' on balsam boughs nor got a whiff o' a birch-bark fire, nor tramped a bed o' ferns at night. There 's a cool, fresh smell for ye! I tell ye there 's a heap o' perfumes 'raound that ye can't buy at a flower store and cork up in a bottle. Well, I guess — Git up, Bess!" and he flopped the reins once more along the ridges and hollows of the mare's back while he encouraged her to renewed efforts with that peculiar clucking sound heeded only by certain beasts of burden.

At the end of the tenth mile he stopped the mare suddenly.

"Hold on," he cried, excitedly, "there 's that scraggy-tail. I missed him when I come down. See! there he is on that green log. I was feared he 'd passed in his chips." I looked and saw a huge gray squirrel with a tail like a rabbit. "That 's him. Durn mean on his tail, warn't it? And one paw gone, too. The dog catched him one day last year and left him tore up that way. I found him limping along when I was

a-sugaring here in the spring and kinder fixed him up, and he 's sorter on the lookout for me when I come along. He 's got a hole 'raound here somewheres."

Jim sprang out of the buck-board. Fumbling under the seat he brought out a bag of nuts. The squirrel took them from his hand, stuffing his mouth full, five at a time, limping away to hide them, and back again for more until the bag wasempty, Jim, contented and unhurried, squatting on the ground, his long knees bent under him. The way in which he did this gave me infinite delight. No vagabond I had ever known ignored time and duty more complacently.

We drove on in silence, Jim taking in everything we passed. This shambling, slenderly educated, and clay-soiled man was fast looming up as a find of incalculable value — the most valuable of my experience. The most important thing, however, was still to be settled if a perfect harmony of interests was to be established between us — *would be like me?*

Marvin's cabin, in which I was to spend my holiday, lay on a clearing half a mile or more outside the woods and at the foot of a hill that helped prop up the Knob. The stage-road ran to the left. The house was a small two-story affair built of logs and clapboards, and was joined

to the outlying stable by a covered passage which was lined with winter firewood. Marvin, who met us at the pasture-gate, carried a lantern, the glow of the twilight having faded from the mountain-tops. He was a small, thick-set man, smooth-shaven as far as the under side of his chin and jaws, with a whisk-broom beard spread over his shirt-front and half of his waistcoat. His forehead was low, and his eyes set close together — sure sign of a close-fisted nature.

To my great surprise his first words, after a limp handshake and a perfunctory "Pleased to see you," were devoted to an outbreak on Jim for having been so long on the road. "Been waitin' here an hour," he said. "What in tarnation kep' ye, anyway? Them cows ain't milked yit!"

"Don't worry. I won't go back on them cows," replied Jim, quietly, as he drove through the gateway, following Marvin, who walked ahead swinging the lantern to show the mare the road.

Mrs. Marvin's manner was as abrupt as that of her husband.

"Well, well!" she said, as I stepped upon the porch, "guess you must be beat out comin' so fur. Come in and set by the stove," and she

resumed her work in the pantry without another word.

I was not offended at her curtness. These denizens of the forest pass too many hours alone and speak too seldom to understand the value of politeness for politeness' sake. The wife, moreover, redeemed herself the next morning when I found her on the back porch feeding the birds.

"Snow ain't fur off," she remarked, in explanation, as she scattered the crumbs about, "and I want 'em to larn early where they kin find something to eat. Ruby 'd never forgive me if I did n't feed the birds. She loves 'em 'bout as much as Jim does."

Neither she nor her husband became any more cordial as they knew me better. To them I was only the boarder whose weekly stipend helped to decrease the farm debt, and who had to be fed three times a day and given a bed at night. It was Jim who made me feel at home. He was the fellow I had longed for; the round peg of a chance acquaintance that exactly fitted into the round hole of my holiday life, and he fulfilled my every expectation. He would fish or hunt or carry a sketch-trap or wash brushes, or loaf, or go to sleep beside me — or get up at daylight — whatever the one half of me wanted to do,

Jim, the other half, agreed to with instant cheerfulness.

And yet, in spite of this constant companionship, I never crossed a certain line of reserve which he had set up between us. He would ramble on by the hour about the things around us; about the trees, the birds, and squirrels; of the way the muskrats lived by the sawmill dam, and their cleverness in avoiding his traps; about the deer that "yarded" back of Taft's Knob last winter, and their leanness in the spring. Sometimes he would speak of Mother Marvin, saying she "thought a heap of Ruby, and ought to," and now and then he would speak of Ruby with a certain tender tone in his voice, telling me of the prizes she had won at school, and how nobody could touch her in "'rithmetic and readin'." But, to my surprise, he never discussed any of his private affairs with me. I say "surprise," for until I met Jim I had found that men of his class talked of little else, especially when over camp-fires smouldering far into the night.

This reticence also extended to Marvin's affairs. The relations between them, I saw, were greatly strained, although Jim always discharged his duties conscientiously, never failing to render a strict account of the time he spent with me,

which Marvin always itemized in the weekly bill. I used often to wonder if he were not under some obligation to his employer which he could not requite; it might be for food and shelter in his earlier days, or perhaps that he was weighted by a money debt he was unable to pay.

One morning, after a particularly ugly outbreak in which Jim had been denounced for some supposed neglect of his duties, I asked him, then lying beside me, his head cupped upon his saucer of a slouch hat, why he stayed on with a man like Marvin, so different from himself in every way. I had often wondered why Jim stood it, and wished that he had the spirit to try his fortunes elsewhere. In my sympathy for him I had even gone so far as to hint once or twice at my finding him other employment. Indeed, I must confess that the only cloud between us dimming my confidence in him was this very lack of independence.

"Well, I got to git along with him for a spell yit," Jim answered, slowly, his eyes turned up to the sky. "He *is* ornery, and no mistake, and I git mad at him sometimes; but then agin I feel kinder sorry for him somehow. He 's a queer kind, ain't he, to be livin' up here all his life with trees and mountains all 'round him, all

doin' their best to please him — and I don't know nothin' friendlier nor honester — and yet him bein' what he is? I 'd 'a' thought they 'd thawed him out 'fore this. And he 's so dog-goned close, too, if I must say it. Why, if it warn't for Mother Marvin, some o' us 'raound here" — and he stopped and lowered his voice — "would be out in the cold; some ye would n't suspect, too."

This apparently studied reticence only incited my curiosity to learn something more of the man for whom I had begun to have a real affection. I wanted particularly to know something of his life before he came to Marvin's! — twelve years now. I could not, of course, ask Marvin or his wife for any details — my intimacy with Jim forbade such an invasion of his privacy — and I met no one else in the forest. I saw plainly that he was not a mountaineer by birth. Not only did his dialect differ from those about him, but his habits were not those of a woodsman. For instance, he would always carry his matches loose in his pocket, instead of in a dry box; then, again, he would wear his trousers rolled up like a fireman's, as if to keep out the wet, instead of tucking them into his boots to tramp the woods the better. Now and then, too, he would let fall some word or expression which would betray

greater familiarity with the ins and outs of the city than with the intricacies of the forest.

"It was fixed up in a glass case like one Abe Condit used to have in his place in the Bowery," he said once in describing a prize trout some city fisherman had stuffed and framed. But when I asked him, with some surprise, if he knew the Bowery, he looked at me quickly, with the slightest trace of offended dignity in his eyes, as if I had meant to overstep the line between us, and answered quickly, —

"I knowed Abe Condit," and immediately changed the conversation.

And yet I must admit that there was nothing in the way he answered this and all my other questions that weakened my confidence in his sincerity. If there were any blackened pages in his past record that he did not want to lay bare even to me, they were discolored, I felt sure, more by privations and suffering than by any stains he was ashamed of.

II

One morning at daybreak I was awakened by Jim swinging back my door. He had on his heavy overcoat and carried a lantern. His slouch hat was flattened on the back of his head; the

rim flared out, framing his face, which was wreathed in smiles. He seemed to be under some peculiar excitement, for his breath came thick and fast.

"Sorry to wake ye, but I 'm goin' to Plymouth," and he lowered his head and stepped inside my room. "Ruby 's comin'. Feller brought me a letter she 'd sent on by the stage. The driver left it at the sawmill. I 'd 'a' told ye las' night, but ye 'd turned in."

"When will you be back ? " I called out from between the bedclothes. We had planned a trip to the Knob the next day, and were to camp out for the night. He evidently saw my disappointment in my face, for he answered quickly, as he bent over me, —

"Oh, to-night, sure ; and maybe Ruby 'll go along. There ain't nothin' ye kin teach her 'bout campin', and she 'll go anywheres I 'll take her — leastways, she allus has." This last was said with some hesitation, as if he had suddenly thought that my presence might make some difference to her. "Leave yer brushes where I kin git 'em," he continued, anxious to make up for my disappointment. "I 'll wash 'em when I git back," and he clattered down the steep stairs and slammed the door behind him.

I jumped from my bed, threw up the narrow,

unpainted sash and watched his tall, awkward figure swinging the lantern as he hurried away toward the shed where the gray mare lived in solitude. Then I crept back to bed again to plan my day anew.

When I joined Marvin at breakfast I found him in one of his ugliest moods, with all his bristles out; not turned toward me, nor even toward his wife, but toward the world in general. Strange to say, he made no allusion to his daughter's return nor to Jim's absence.

Suddenly his wife blurted out, as if she could restrain her joy no longer: —

"You ain't never seen Ruby. She 's comin' to-night. Jim 's gone for her. The head teacher's sick and some o' the girls has got a holiday."

"Yes," I answered, quietly; "Jim told me."

"Oh, he did!" And she put down her cup and leaned across the table. "Well, I 'm awful glad she 's comin', just so ye kin see her. Ye won't never forgit her when ye do. She 's got six months more, then she 's comin' home for a spell until she goes teachin'; " and a look of exultant pride and joy of which I had never believed her capable came into her eyes.

Marvin turned his head and in a half-angry way said: —

"It 's 'bout time. Little good ye 've had o'

her for the last four years with yer fool notions 'bout eddication." And he put on his hat and went out.

"How old is your daughter?" I asked, more to soften the effect of Marvin's brutal remark than anything else.

"She 's seventeen, I guess, but she 's big for her age."

The announcement came as a surprise. I had supposed from the way Jim had always spoken of her that she was a child of twelve. The possibilities of her camping out became all the more remote.

"And has she been away from you long this time?"

"'Bout four months. I did n't 'spect her to come till Christmas, till she wrote Jim to come for her. He allus fetches her. They 'll be 'long 'bout dark."

I instantly determined to extend the heartiest of welcomes to this little daughter, not alone because of the mother and Jim, but because the home-coming of a young girl had always appealed to me as one of the most satisfying of all family events. My memory instinctively went back to the return of my own little bird, and of the many marvellous preparations begun weeks before in honor of the event. I saw

again in my mind the wondrous curtains, stiff and starched, hung at the windows and about the high posts of the quaint bedstead that had sheltered her from childhood; I remembered the special bakings and brewings and the innumerable bundles, big and little, that were tucked away under secretive sofas and the thousand other surprises that hung upon her coming. This little wood-pigeon should have my best attention, however simple and plain might be her plumage.

Moreover, I was more than curious to see what particular kind of a fledgling could be born to these two parent birds — one so hard and unsympathetic and the other so kind and simple. Jim, I remembered, had always spoken enthusiastically of Ruby, but then Jim always spilled over the edges whenever he spoke of the things he loved, whether they were dogs, trees, flowers, or brilliant young maidens.

At nine o'clock that night my ear caught the sound of wheels; then came Jim's "Whoa! Bess," and the mother threw wide the door and caught her daughter in her arms.

"Oh, mother!" the girl cried, "was n't it good I could come?" and she kissed her again. Then she turned to me — I had followed out in the starlight — "Uncle Jim sent me word you

were here, and I was so glad. I 've always wanted to see somebody paint, and Uncle Jim says he 's sure you will let me go sketching with you. I was n't coming home with the other girls until I got his letter and knew that you were here."

She said this frankly and simply, without the slightest embarrassment, and without a trace of any dialect in her speech. Jim evidently had not exaggerated her attainments. She had, too, unconsciously to herself, solved one of the mysteries that surrounded me. If Jim was her uncle it must be on her mother's side; it certainly could not be on Marvin's.

"And I 'm glad, too," I replied. "Of course you shall go, and Jim tells me also that you are as good a woodsman as he is. And so Jim 's your uncle, is he? He never told me that."

"Oh, no," she answered quickly, with a little deprecatory air. "He is n't my *real* uncle. He 's just Jim, but I 've always called him Uncle Jim ever since I was a little girl. And I love him dearly; don't I, Uncle Jim?" and she turned toward him as he entered the door carrying her bundle, followed by her father with the kerosene lamp, Marvin having brought it out to help Jim unload the buck-board.

"That 's what ye allus says, baby-girl," an-

swered Jim, "so I got to believe it. And if I did n't, there would n't be no use o' livin' — not a mite." There was a vibrating tenderness in the man's voice, and an indescribable pathos in its tone, as he spoke, that caused me instinctively to turn my head and look into his face.

The light shone full upon it — so full and direct that there were no shadows anywhere. Whether it was because of the lamp's direct rays or because of his long ride in the crisp November air, I could not decide, but certain it was that Jim's face was without a wrinkle, and that he looked twenty years younger. Even the hard, drawn lines about his mouth and nose had disappeared.

With the light of the lamp came another revelation. While the girl's cheap woollen dress and jacket, of a pattern sold in the country stores, showed her to be the product of Marvin's home and the recipient of his scanty bounty, her trim, well-rounded figure, soft, glossy hair — now that her hat was off — and small hands and feet, classed her as one of far gentler birth. There was, too, as she passed in and out of the room helping her mother with the supper-table, a certain grace and dignity, especially in the way in which she bent her head on one side to listen, a gesture often seen in a drawing-room, but

never, in my experience, in a cabin. What astonished me most, however, were her hands — her exquisitely modelled hands, still ruddy from the fresh night-air, but so wonderfully curved and dimpled. And then, too, the perfect graciousness and simplicity of her manner and its absolute freedom from coquetry or self-consciousness. Her mother was right — I would not soon forget her. And yet, by what freak of Nature, I found myself continually repeating, had this flower been made to bloom on this soil? Through what ancestor's veins had this blood trickled, and through what channels had it reached these humble occupants of a forest home?

But if her mother was the happier for her coming, Jim, radiant with joy, seemed to walk on air. His head was up, his arms were swinging free, and there was a lightness and spring in his movements that made me forget the grotesqueness of his gait. Nor, as the days went by, did this buoyant happiness ever fail him. He and Ruby were inseparable from the time she opened the rude door of her bedroom in the morning until she bade us all good-night and carried with her all the light and charm and joyousness of the day. The camping-out, I may as well state, had been given up as soon

as I had mentioned it, she saying to me with a little start, as if frightened at the proposition, that she thought she 'd better stay home and help her mother. Then, seeing Jim's face fall, she added, "But we can be off all day, can't we?"

And Jim answered that it was all right, just as Ruby said — that we would go fishing instead, and that he had spotted an old trout that lived in a hole down the East Branch that he 'd been saving for her, and that he had tied the day before the "very fly that will fix him"— all of which was true, for Ruby landed him the next day with all the skill of a professional, besides a dozen smaller ones whose haunts Jim knew.

And so the weeks flew by, Ruby tramping the forest daily between us or sitting beside me as I painted, noting every stroke of my brush and asking me innumerable questions as to the choice of colors and the mixing of the tints. At other times she would ply me with questions, making me tell her of the things I had seen abroad and of the cities and peoples she had read of; or she would talk of the books she had studied, and of others she wanted to read. Jim would listen eagerly, with a certain pride in his eyes that she knew so much and could talk so well, and when we were alone he would comment on it: —

"Nearly catched ye, did n't she? I see once or twice ye were stumped clean out o' yer boots on them questions she fired. How her little head holds it all is what bothers me. But I allus knowed how it would be; I told the old man so ten year ago. Ain't one o' 'em 'raound here kin touch her."

At night, under the kerosene lamp in the cabin, she would ask me to read aloud, she looking up into my face and drinking in every word, the others listening, Jim watching every expression that crossed her face.

Dear old Jim! I still see your tender, shrinking eyes peering at her from under your bushy eyebrows and still hear the low ripple of your merry laugh over her volleys of questions. You were so proud of her and so happy in those days! So tender in touch, so gentle of voice, so constant in care!

One morning I had some letters to write, and Ruby and Jim took the rods and went up the brook without me. They both begged me to go, Ruby being particularly urgent, I thought, but I had already delayed the mail too long and so refused point-blank — too abruptly, perhaps, as I thought afterward, when I remembered the keen look of disappointment in her face. When she re-entered the cabin alone an hour later she

passed me hurriedly, and calling out to her father that Jim was wanted at the sawmill to fix the wheel and would not be back until morning, shut herself into her room before I could offer myself in Jim's place — which I would gladly have done, now that her morning's pleasure had been spoiled.

When she joined us at supper — she had kept her room all day — I saw that her eyes were red, as if she had been crying. I knew then that I had offended her.

"Ruby, I really could n't go," I said. "You don't feel cross about it, do you?"

"Oh, no," she answered, with some earnestness. "And I knew you were busy."

"And about Jim — what 's the matter with the wheel?" I asked, greatly relieved at the discovery that whatever troubled her, my staying at home had not caused it.

"One of the buckets is broken — Uncle Jim always fixes it," and she turned her head away to hide her tears.

"Is Jim a carpenter, too?" I asked, with a smile.

"Why, yes," she replied. "Did n't you know that? They often send for him to fix the mill. There 's no one else about here who can." And she changed the conversation and began

talking of the beauty of that part of the brook where they had been to fish, and of the rich brown tint of the water in the pools, and how lovely the red sumachs were reflected in their depths.

The next morning, and without any previous warning, Ruby appeared in her cloth dress and jacket and announced her intention of taking the stage back to Plymouth, adding that as Jim had not returned, Marvin must drive her over to the cross-roads. I offered my services, but she declined them graciously but firmly, bidding me good-by and saying with one of her earnest looks, as she held my hand in hers, that she should never forget my kindness to Jim, and that she would always remember me for what I had done for him, and then she added with peculiar tenderness, —

"And dear Uncle Jim won't forget you, either."

And so she had gone, and with her had faded all the light and joyousness of the place.

When Jim returned the next day I was at work in the pasture painting a group of white birches. I hallooed to him as he shambled along within a hundred yards of me, swinging his arms, but he did not answer except to turn his head.

That night at table he replied to my questions in monosyllables, explaining his not stopping when I had called in the morning by saying that he did n't want to "'start me," and when I laughed and told him — using his own words — that Ruby "would n't pass a fellow and give him the dead, cold shake," he pushed back his chair with a sudden impatient gesture, said he had forgotten something, and left the table without a word or look in reply.

I knew then that I had hurt him in some way.

"What 's the matter with Jim, Mr. Marvin? He seems put out about something. Did he say anything to you?" I asked, astonished at Jim's behavior, and anxious for some clew by which to solve its mystery.

"Got one o' his spells on. Gits that way sometimes, and when he does ye can't git no good out o' him. I want them turnips dug, and he 's got to do it or git out. I ain't hired him to loaf 'round all day with Ruby and to sulk when she 's gone. I 'm a-payin' him wages right along, ain't I?" he added with some fierceness as he stopped at the door. "What he gits for fixin' the mill ain't nothin' to me — I don't git a cent on it."

III

When the morning came and Jim had not returned I started for the mill. I found him alone, sitting idly on a bench near the water-wheel. I had heard the hum of the saw before I reached the dam and knew that he had finished his work.

"Jim," I said, walking up to him and extending my hand, "if I have done anything to hurt your feelings, I 'm sorry. If I had known you would have been put out by my not going with Ruby I would have let the mail wait."

He took my hand mechanically, but he did not raise his eyes. The old look had returned to his face, as if he were afraid of some sudden blow. "I did all I could to make Ruby's visit a happy one — don't you know I did?" I continued.

He leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees, his eyes still on the ground. There was something infinitely pathetic in the attitude.

"Ye ain't done nothin' to me," he answered, slowly, "and ye ain't done nothin' to Ruby. I cottoned to ye fust time I see ye, and so did Ruby, and we still do. It ain't that."

"Well, what is it, then? Why have you kept away from me?"

He arose wearily until his whole length was

erect, hooked his long arms behind his back, and began walking up and down the platform. He was no longer my comrade of the woods. The spring and buoyancy of his step had gone out of him. He seemed shrivelled and bent, as if some sudden weakness had overcome him. His face was white and drawn, and the eyelids drooped, as if he had not slept.

At the second turn he stopped, gazed abstractedly at the boards under his feet, as a man sometimes does when his mind is on other things. Mechanically he stooped to pick up a small iron nut that had slipped from one of the bolts used in repairing the wheel, and in the same abstracted way, still ignoring me, raised it to his eye, looked through the hole for a moment, and then tossed it into the dam. The splash of the iron striking the water frightened a bird, which arose in the air, sang a clear, sweet note, and disappeared in the bushes on the opposite bank. Jim started, turned his head quickly, following the flight of the bird, and sank slowly back upon the bench, his face in his hands.

"There it is again," he cried out. "Every way I turn it's the same thing. I can't even chuck nothin' overboard but I hear it."

"Hear what?" The keen anguish expressed in his voice had alarmed me.

"That song-sparrow — did ye hear it? I tell ye this thing 'll drive me crazy. I tell ye I can't stand it — I can't stand it." And he turned his head and covered his face with his sleeve.

The outburst and gesture only intensified my anxiety. Was Jim's mind giving away? I arose from my seat and bent over him, my hand on his arm.

"Why, that 's only a bird, Jim — I saw it — it 's gone into the bushes."

"Yes, I know it; I seen it; that's what hurts me; that 's what's allus goin' to hurt me. And 't ain't only goin' to be the birds. It 's goin' to be the trees and the gray-backs and the trout we catched, and everywhere I look and every place I go to it 's goin' to be the same thing. And it ain't never goin' to be no better — never — never — long as I live. She said so. Them was her very words. I ain't never goin' to forgit 'em." And he leaned his head in a baffled, tired way against the planking of the mill.

"Who said so, Jim?" I asked.

Jim raised his head, looked me straight in the face, and, with the tears starting in his eyes, answered in a low voice, —

"Ruby. She loves 'em — loves every one o' 'em. Oh, what 's goin' to become o' me now, anyhow?"

"Well, but I don't"— The revelation came to me before I could complete the sentence. Jim's face had told the story of his heart!

"Jim," I said, laying my hand on his shoulder, "do you love Ruby?"

"Sit down here," he said, in a hopeless, despondent voice, "and mebbe I 'll git grit enough to tell ye. I ain't never told none o' the folks that comes up here o' how things was, but I 'm goin' to tell you. And I 'm goin' to tell it to ye plumb from the beginnin', too." And a sigh like the moan of one in pain escaped him.

"Twelve years ago I come here from New York. I 'd been cleaned out o' everything I had by a man I trusted, and I was flat broke. I did n't care where I went, so 's I got away from the city and from people. I wanted to git somewheres out into the country, and so I got aboard the train and kep' on till I 'd struck Plymouth. There my money gin out and I started up the road into the mountains. I thought I 'd hire out to some choppers for the winter. When night come I see a light and knocked at the door and Jed opened it. He warn't goin' to keep me, but he was a-buildin' the shed where the old mare is now, and he found out I was handy with the tools and did n't want no wages, only my board, so he let me stay. The next spring he hired me

regular and give me wages every month. I kep' along, choppin' in the winter and helpin' 'raound the place, and in summer goin' out with the parties that come up from the city, helpin' 'em fish and hunt. I liked that, for I loved the woods ever since I was a boy, when I used to go off by myself and stay days and nights with nothin' but a tin can o' grub and a blanket. That 's why I come here when I went broke.

"One summer there come a feller from Boston to fish. He brought his wife along, and I used to go out with both o' 'em. The man's wife was puttin' up for some o' them children's homes, and she used to talk to Marm Marvin about takin' one o' the children and what a comfort it would be to the child to git out into the fresh air, and one mornin' 'fore she left she took Jed down in the woods and talked to him, and the week after she left for home Marm Marvin sent me over to the station — same place I fetched ye — and out she got with a tag sewed on her jacket and her name on it, and a bundle o' clothes no bigger 'n your head. She was 'bout seven or eight years old, and the cunnin'est young un ye ever see. Jus' the same eyes she 's got now, only they looked bigger, 'cause her cheeks was caved in."

"Not Ruby, Jim!" I cried, in astonishment.

"Yes, Ruby. That 's what was on the tag."

"And she is n't Marvin's child ? "

"No more 'n she 's yourn, nor mine. She ain't nobody's child that anybody knows about. She 's jus' Ruby, and that 's all there is to her.

"Well, by the time I 'd got her out to the farm and had heared her talk and seen her clap her hands at the chippies, and laugh at the birds, and go half wild over every little thing she 'd see, I knowed I 'd got hold o' something that filled up every crack o' my heart. And she did n't come a day too soon, for Jed had got so ugly there warn't no livin' with him, and I 'd made up my mind to quit, and I would if he had n't took a streak agin Ruby at the start. Then I knowed where my trail led. And arter that I never let her out o' my sight. Marm Marvin was different. She never had no child o' her own, and she warmed up to Ruby more 'n more every day, and she loves her now much as she kin love anything.

"That fust winter we had a good deal o' snow and I made a pair o' leggins for her out o' a deer's skin I 'd killed, and rigged up a sled, and I 'd haul her after me wherever I went, and when school opened down to the cross-roads I 'd haul her down and bring her back if the snow warn't too deep, and when summer come she 'd go 'long

jus' the same. I taught her to fish and shoot, and often she 'd stay out in camp with me all night when I was tendin' the sugar-maples — she sleepin' on the balsams with my coat throwed over her.

"Things went on this way till 'bout three years ago, when I see she warn't gittin' ahead fast as she could, and I went for the old man to send her to school down to Plymouth. Marm Marvin was willin', but Jed held out, and at last he give in after my talkin' to him. So I hooked up the buck-board and drove her down to Plymouth and left her, with her arms 'raound my neck and the tears streamin' down her face. But she was game all the same, only she hated to have me leave her.

"Every July and Christmas I 'd go for her, and she 'd allus be waitin' for me at the head o' the stairs or would come runnin' down with her arms wide open, and she 'd kiss me and hug me and call me dear Uncle Jim, and tell me how she loved me, and how there warn't nothin' in the world she loved so much; and then when she 'd git home we 'd tramp the woods together every chance we got."

Jim stopped and bent forward, his face in his hands, his elbows on his knees. For a time he was silent; then he went on: —

"This last time when I went for her she pretty nigh took my breath away. She seemed just as glad to see me, but she did n't git into my arms as she useter, and she looked different, too. She had growed every way bigger, and wider, and older. I kep' a-lookin' at her, tryin' to find the little girl I 'd left some months afore, but she warn't there. She acted different, too — more quiet like and still, so that I was feared to touch her like I useter, and took it out in talkin' to her and listenin' to all she told me o' what she was larnin', and how this winter she was goin' to git through and git her certificate, and then she was goin' to teach and help her mother — she allus called Marm Marvin mother. Then she told me o' how one o' the teachers — a young fellow from a college — was goin' to set up a school o' his own and goin' to git some o' the graduates to help teach when he got started, and how he had asked her to be one o' 'em, and how she was goin' with him.

"Since you been here and us three been together and I begun to see how happy she was a-talkin' to you and askin' you questions, I got worse 'n ever over her. I begun to see that I warn't what I had been to her. When we was trampin' and fishin' it was all right and she 'd talk to me 'bout the ways o' the birds and what

flowers come up fust and all that, but when it got to geography and history I warn't in it with her, and you was. That sickened me more 'n ever. Pretty soon I began to feel as if everything I had in life war slippin' away from me. I didn't want her to shut me out from anything she had. I wanted to have half, same 's we allus had — half for me and half for her. Why, lately, when I lay awake nights a-thinkin' it over, I 've wished sometimes that she had n't growed up at all, and that she 'd allus be my baby-girl and I her Uncle Jim.

" Yesterday mornin' " — Jim's voice broke, and he cleared his throat — " yesterday mornin' we went down the branch, as ye know, and she was a-settin' on a log throwin' her fly into the pool, when one o' them song-sparrows lit on a bush and looked at her, and begin to sing like he 'd bust his little chest, and she sung back at him with her eyes a-laughin' and her hair a-flyin', and I stood lookin' at her and my heart choked up in my throat, and I leaned over and took the rod out o' her hand.

" ' Baby-girl,' I says, ' there ain't a bird 'raound here that ain't got a mate ; and that 's what makes 'em so happy. I ain't got nobody but you, Ruby — don't go 'way from me, child — stay with me.' And I told her. She looked

at me startled like, same as a deer does when he hears a dog bark; then she jumped up and begin to cry.

"'Oh, Jim — Jim — dear Jim!' she says. 'I love you so, and you've been so good to me all my life, but don't — don't never say that to me again. That can never be — not so long as we live.' And she dropped down on the ground and cried till she couldn't git her breath. Then she got up and kissed my hands and went home, leavin' me there alone feelin' like I'd fell off a scaffoldin' and struck the sidewalk."

Jim arose from his seat and began pacing the platform again. I had not spoken a word through his long story.

"Jim," I began, "how old are you?"

"Forty-two," he said, in a patient, listless way.

"More than twice as old as Ruby, aren't you? Old enough, really, to be her father. You love her, don't you — love her for herself — not yourself? You wouldn't let anything hurt her if you could help it. You were right when you said every bird has its mate. That's true, Jim, and the way it ought to be — but they mate with *this* year's birds, not *last* year's. When men get as old as you and I we

forget these things sometimes, but they are true all the same."

"I know it," he broke out, "I know it; you can't tell me nothin' about it. I thought it all over more 'n a hundred times lately. I could bite my tongue off for sayin' what I did to her, and sp'ilin' her visit, but it 's done now and I can't help it, and I 've got to stay here and bear it."

"No, Jim, don't stay here. So long as she sees you around here she 'll be unhappy, and you will be equally miserable. Go away from here; find work somewhere else."

"When ? " he said, quietly.

"Now; right away; before she comes back at Christmas."

"No, I can't do it, and I won't. Not till she graduates and gits her certificate. That 'll be next June."

"What 's that got to do with it ? "

"Got a good deal to do with it. If I should leave now jes 's winter 's comin' on I might n't git another job, and she 'd have to come home and her eddication be sp'ilt."

"What would bring her home ? " I asked in surprise.

"What would bring her home ? " he repeated, with some irritation. "Why they 'd send her

if the bills warn't paid — that 's what. Marm Marvin could n't help her, and Jed would n't give her a cent. Them school-bills, you know, I 've always paid out o' my wages — that 's why Jed let her go. No; I 'll stick it out here till she finishes, if it kills me. Baby-girl shan't miss nothin' through me."

One beautiful spring day I swung back the gate of a garden on the outskirts of the village of Plymouth and walked up a flower-bordered path to a cottage porch smothered in vines.

Ruby was standing in the door, her hands held out to me. I had not seen her for years. Her husband had not returned yet from their school, but she expected him every minute.

"And dear old Jim?" I asked. "What has become of him?"

"Look," she said, pointing to a shambling, awkward figure stooping under the apple-trees, which were in full bloom. "There he is, picking blossoms with little Ruby. He never leaves her for a minute."

COMPARTMENT NUMBER FOUR — COLOGNE TO PARIS

HE was looking through a hole — a square hole, framed about with mahogany and ground glass. His face was red, his eyes were black, his mustache — waxed to two needle-points — was a yellowish brown; his necktie blue and his uniform dark chocolate seamed with little threads of vermilion and incrusted with silver poker-chip buttons emblazoned with the initials of the corporation which he served.

I knew I was all right when I read the initials. I had found the place and the man. The place was the ticket-office of the International Sleeping-Car Company. The man was its agent.

So I said, very politely and in my best French — it is a little frayed and worn at the edges, but it arrives — sometimes ——

"A lower for Paris."

The man in chocolate, with touches of the three primary colors distributed over his person, half closed his eyes, lifted his shoulders in a tired way, loosened his fingers, and, without changing the lay-figure expression of his face, replied:

"There is nothing."

"Not a berth?"

"Not a berth."

"Are they all *paid* for?" and I accented the word *paid*. I spend countless nights on Pullmans in my own country and am familiar with many uncanny devices.

"All but one."

"Why can't I have it? It is within an hour of train-time. Who ordered it?"

"The Director of the great circus. He is here now waiting for his troupe, which arrives from Berlin in a special car belonging to our company. The other car — the one that starts from here — is full. We have only two cars on this train — Monsieur the Director has the last berth."

He said this, of course, in his native language. I am merely translating it. I would give it to you in the original, but it might embarrass you; it certainly would me.

"What's the matter with putting the Circus Director in the special car? Your regulations say berths must be paid for one hour before train-time. It is now fifty-five minutes of eight. Your train goes at eight, does n't it? Here is a twenty-franc gold piece — never mind the change" — and I flung a napoleon on the desk before him.

The bunch of fingers disentangled themselves,

the shoulders sank an inch, the waxed ends of the taffy-colored mustache vibrated slightly, and a smile widened in circles across the flat dulness of his face until it engulfed his eyebrows, ears, and chin. The effect of the dropping of the coin had been like the dropping of a stone into the still smoothness of a pool — the wrinkling wavelets had reached the uttermost shore-line.

The smile over, he opened a book about the size of an atlas, dipped a pen in an inkstand, recorded my point of departure — Cologne, and my point of arrival — Paris; dried the inscription with a pinch of black sand filched from a saucer — same old black sand used in the last century — cut a section of the page with a pair of shears, tossed the coin in the air, listened to its ring on the desk with a satisfied look, slipped the whole twenty-franc piece into his pocket, — regular fare, fifteen francs, irregular swindle, five francs, — and handed me the billet. Then he added, with a trace of humor in his voice, —

"If Monsieur the Director of the Circus comes now he will go in the special car."

I examined the billet. I had Compartment Number Four, upper berth, Car 312.

I lighted a cigarette, gave my small luggage-checks to a porter with directions to deposit my traps in my berth when the train was ready —

the company's office was in the depot — and strolled out to look at the station.

You know the Cologne station, of course. It is as big as the Coliseum, shaped like an old-fashioned hoop-skirt with a petticoat of glass, and connects with one of the most beautiful bridges in the world. It has two immense waiting-rooms, with historical frescos on the walls and two huge fireplaces supported on nudities shivering with the cold, for no stick of wood ever blazes on the well-swept hearths. It has also a gorgeous restaurant, with panelled ceiling, across which skip bunches of butterfly Cupids in shameless costumes, and an inviting café with never-dying palms in the windows, a portrait of the Kaiser over the counter holding the coffee-urn, and a portrait of the Kaiserin over the counter holding the little sticky cakes, the baby bottles of champagne, and the long lady-finger sandwiches with bits of red ham hanging from their open ends like poodle-dogs' tongues.

Outside these ponderous rooms, under the arching glass of the station itself, is a broad platform protected from rushing trains and yard engines by a wrought-iron fence, twisted into most enchanting scrolls and pierced down its whole length by sliding wickets, before which stand be-capped and be-buttoned officials of the road. It is part

of the duty of these gatemen never to let you through these wickets until the arrival of the last possible moment compatible with the boarding of your car.

So if you are wise — that is, if you have been left behind several times depending on the watchfulness of these Cerberi and their promises to let you know when your train is ready — you hang about this gate and keep an eye out as to what is going on. I had been two nights on the sleeper through from Warsaw and beyond, and could take no chances.

Then again, I wanted to watch the people coming and going — it is a habit of mine; nothing gives me greater pleasure. It has made me an expert in judging human nature. I flatter myself that I can tell the moment I set my eyes on a man just what manner of life he leads, what language he speaks, whether he be rich or poor, educated or ignorant. I can do all this before he opens his mouth. I have never been proud of this faculty. I have regarded it more as a gift, as I would an acute sense of color, or a correct eye for drawing, or the ability to acquire a language quickly. I was born that way, I suppose.

The first man to approach the wicket was the Director of the Circus. I knew him at once.

There was no question as to *his* identity. He wore a fifty-candle-power stone in his shirt-front, a silk hat that shone like a new hansom cab, and a Prince Albert coat that came below his knees. He had taken off his ring boots, of course, and was without his whip, but otherwise he was completely equipped to raise his hat and say: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the world-renowned," etc., etc., "will now perform the blood-curdling act of," etc.

He was attended by a servant, was smooth-shaven, had an Oriental complexion as yellow as the back of an old law-book, black, jet-black eyes, and jet-black hair.

I listened for some outbreak, some explosion about his bed having been sold from under him, some protest about the rights of a citizen. None came. The gateman merely touched his hat, slid back the gate, and the Director of the Greatest Show on Earth, smiling haughtily, passed in, crossed the platform and stepped into a *wagon-lit* standing on the next track to me labelled "Paris 312," and left me behind. The gateman had had free tickets, of course, or would have, for himself and family whenever the troupe should be in Cologne. There was no doubt of it — I saw it in the smile that permeated his face and the bow that bent his back as the man passed him.

This kind of petty bribery is, of course, abominable, and should never be countenanced.

Some members of the troupe came next. The gentleman in chocolate with my five francs in his pocket did not mention the name of any other member of the troupe except the Director, but it was impossible for me to be mistaken about these people — I have seen too many of them.

She was rather an imposing-looking woman — not young, not old — dressed in a long travelling-cloak trimmed with fur (how well we know these night-cloaks of the professional!), and was holding by a short leash an enormous Danish hound; one of those great hulking hounds — a hound whose shoulders shake when he walks, with white, blinky eyes, smooth skin, and mottled spots — brown and gray — spattered along his back and ribs. Trick dog, evidently — one who springs at the throat of the assassin (the assassin has a thin slice of sausage tucked inside his collar-button), pulls him to the earth, and sucks his life's blood or chews his throat. She, too, went through with a sweep — the dog beside her, followed by a maid carrying two band-boxes, a fur boa, and a bunch of parasols closely furled and tied with a ribbon. I braced up, threw out my shoulders, and walked boldly up to the wicket. The be-buttoned and be-capped man

looked at me coldly, waved me away with his hand, and said "Nein."

Now, when a man of intelligence, speaking the language of the country, backed by the police, the gendarmerie, and the Imperial Army, says "Nein" to me, if I am away from home, I generally bow to the will of the people.

So I waited.

Then I heard the low rumble of a train and a short high-keyed shriek — we used to make just such shrieking sounds by blowing into keys when we were boys. The St. Petersburg express was approaching end foremost — the train with the special sleeping-car holding the balance of the circus troupe. The next moment it bumped gently into Car No. 312, holding the Director (I wondered whether he had my berth), the woman with the dog, and her maid.

The gateman paused until the train came to a dead standstill, waited until the last arriving passenger had passed through an exit lower down along the fence, slid back the gate, and I walked through — alone! Not another passenger either before or behind me! And the chocolate gentleman told me the car was full! The fraud!

When I reached the steps of Car No. 312, I found a second gentleman in chocolate and poker-chip buttons. He was scrutinizing a list

of sold and unsold compartments by the aid of a conductor's lantern braceleted on his elbow. He turned the glare of his lantern on my ticket, entered the car and preceded me down its narrow aisle and slid back the door of Number Four. I stepped in, and discovered, to my relief, my small luggage, hat-box, shawl, and umbrella, safely deposited in the upper berth. My night's rest, at all events, was assured.

I found also a bald-headed passenger, who was standing with his back to me stowing his small luggage into the lower berth. He looked at me over his shoulder for a moment, moved his bag so that I could pass, and went on with his work. My sharing his compartment had evidently produced an unpleasant impression.

I slipped off my overcoat, found my travelling-cap, and was about to light a fresh cigarette when there came a tap at the door. Outside in the aisle stood a man with a silk hat in his hand.

"Monsieur, I am the Manager of the Compagnie Internationale. It is my pleasure to ask whether you have everything for your comfort. I am going on to Paris with this same train, so I shall be quite within your reach."

I thanked him for his courtesy, assured him that now that all my traps were in my berth

and the conductor had shown me to my compartment, my wants were supplied, and watched him knock at the next door. Then I stepped out into the aisle.

It was an ordinary European Pullman, some ten staterooms in a row, a lavatory at one end and a three-foot sofa at the other. When you are unwilling to take your early morning coffee on the gritty, dust-covered, one-foot-square, propped-up-with-a-leg table in your stuffy compartment, you drink it sitting on this sofa. Three of these compartment doors were open. The woman with the dog was in Number One. The big dog and the maid in Number Two, and the Ring Master in Number Three (his original number, no doubt; the clerk had only lied) — I, of course, came next in Number Four.

Soon I became conscious that a discussion was going on in the newly arrived circus-car whose platform touched ours. I could hear the voice of a woman and then the gruff tones of a man. Then a babel of sounds came sifting down the aisle. I stepped over the dog, who had now stretched himself at full length in the aisle, and out on to the platform.

A third gentleman in chocolate — the porter of the circus-car and a duplicate of our own — was being besieged by a group of people all

talking at once and all in different tongues. A mild-eyed, pink-cheeked young man in spectacles was speaking German; a richly dressed woman of thirty-five, very stately and very beautiful, was interpolating in Russian, and a plump, rosy-cheeked, energetic little Englishwoman was hurling English in a way as pointed as it was forcible. Everybody was excited and everybody was angry. Standing in the car-door listening intently was a French maid and two round-faced, wide-collared boys, of say ten and twelve. The dispute was evidently over these two boys, as every attack contained some direct allusion to "mes enfants" or "these children" or "die Kinder," ending in the fore-finger of each speaker being thrust bayonet fashion toward the boys.

While I was making up my mind as to the particular rôles which these several members of the Greatest Show on Earth played, I heard the English girl say — in French, of course — English-French — with an accent: —

"It is a shame to be treated in this way. We have paid for every one of these compartments, and you know it. The young masters will not go in those vile-smelling staterooms for the night. It 's no place for them. I will go to the office and complain."

The third chocolate attendant, in reply, merely lifted his shoulders. It was the same old lift — a tired feeling seems to permeate these gentlemen, as if they were bored to death. A hotel clerk on the Riviera sometimes has this lift when he tells you he has not a bed in the house and you tell him he — prevaricates. I knew something of the lift — it had already cost me five francs. I knew, too, what kind of medicine that sort of tired feeling needed, and that until the bribe was paid the young woman and her party would be bedless.

My own anger was now aroused. Here was a woman, rather a pretty woman, an Anglo-Saxon — my own race — in a strange city and under the power of a minion whose only object was plunder. That she jumped through hoops or rode bareback in absurdly short clothes, or sold pink lemonade in spangles, made no difference. She was in trouble, and needed assistance. I advanced with my best bow.

"Madam, can I do anything for you?"

She turned, and, with a grateful smile, said, "Oh, you speak English?"

I again inclined my head.

"Well, sir, we have come from St. Petersburg by way of Berlin. We had five compartments through to Paris for our party when we

started, all paid for, and this man has the tickets. He says we must get out here and buy new tickets or we must all go in two staterooms, which is impossible" — and she swept her hand over the balance of the troupe.

The chocolate gentleman again lifted his shoulders. He had been abused in that way by passengers since the day of his birth.

The richly dressed woman, another Leading Lady doubtless, now joined in the conversation — she probably was the trained rabbit-woman or the girl with the pigeons — pigeons most likely, for these stars are always selected by the management for their beauty, and she certainly was beautiful.

"And, Monsieur," — this in French — again I spare the reader, — "I have given him" — pointing to the chocolate gentleman — "pourboire all the time. One hundred francs yesterday and two gold pieces this morning. My maid is quite right — it is abominable, such treatment" —

The personalities now seemed to weary the attendant. His elbows widened, his shoulders nearly touched his ears, and his fingers opened; then he went into his closet and shut the door. So far as he was concerned the debate was closed.

The memory of my own five francs now loomed up, and with them the recollection of the trick by which they had been stolen from me.

"Madam," I said, gravely, "I will bring the Manager. He is here and will see that justice is done you."

It was marvellous to watch what followed. The Manager listened patiently to the Pigeon Charmer's explanation of the outrage, started suddenly when she mentioned some details which I did not hear, bowed as low to her reply as if she had been a Duchess — his hat to the floor — slid back the closet-door, beckoned me to step in, closed it again upon the three of us, and in less than five minutes he had the third chocolate gentleman out of his chocolate uniform and stripped to his underwear, with every pocket turned inside out, bringing to light the one-hundred-franc note, the gold pieces, and all five of the circus parties' tickets.

Then he flung the astonished and humiliated man his trousers, waited until he had pulled them on, grabbed him by his shirt-collar and marched him out of the car across the platform through the wicket gate, every passenger on the train looking on in wonder. Five minutes later the whole party — the stately Pigeon Charmer, her English maid, the spectacled German (Perform-

ing Sword-Swallower or Lightning Calculator probably), and the two boys (Tumblers unquestionably), with all their belongings—were transferred to my car, the Pigeon Charmer graciously accepting my escort, the passengers, including the bald-headed man — my room-mate — standing on one side to let us pass: all except the big dog, who had shifted his quarters, and was now stretched out at the sofa end of the car.

Then another extraordinary thing happened — or rather a series of extraordinary things.

When I had deposited the Pigeon Charmer in her own compartment (Number Five, next door), and had entered my own, I found my bald-headed room-mate again inside. This time he was seated by the foot-square, dust-covered table assorting cigarettes. He had transferred my small luggage — bag, coat, etc. — to the *lower* berth, and had arranged his own belongings in the upper one.

He sprang to his feet the instant he saw me.

The bow of the Sleeping-Car Manager to the Pigeon Charmer was but a bend in a telegraph-pole to the sweep the bald-headed man now made me. I thought his scalp would touch the car-floor.

"No, your Highness," he cried, "I insist" — this to my protest that I had come last — that

he had prior right — besides, he was an older man, etc., etc. — " I could not sleep if I thought you were not most comfortable — nothing can move me. Pardon me — will not your Highness accept one of my poor cigarettes? They, of course, are not like the ones you use, but I always do my best. I have now a new cigarette-girl, and she rolled them for me herself, and brought them to me just as I was leaving St. Petersburg. Permit me " — and he handed me a little leather box filled with Russian cigarettes.

Now, figuratively speaking, when you have been buncoed out of five francs by a menial in a ticket-office, jumped upon and trampled under foot by a gate-keeper who has kept you cooling your heels outside his wicket while your inferiors have passed in ahead of you — to have even a bald-headed man kotow to you, give you the choice berth in the compartment, move your traps himself, and then apologize for offering you the best cigarette you ever smoked in your life — well! that is to have myrrh, and frankincense, and oil of balsam, and balm of Gilead poured on your tenderest wound.

I accepted the cigarette.

Not haughtily — not even condescendingly — just as a matter of course. He had evidently found out who and what I was. He had seen

me address the Pigeon Charmer, and had recognized instantly, from my speech and bearing — both, perhaps — that dominating vital force, that breezy independence which envelops most Americans, and which makes them so popular the world over. In thus kotowing he was only getting in line with the citizens of most of the other effete monarchies of Europe. Every traveller is conscious of it. His bow showed it — so did the soft purring quality of his speech. Recollections of Manila, Santiago, and the voyage of the Oregon around Cape Horn were in the bow, and Kansas wheat, Georgia cotton, and the Steel Trust in the dulcet tones of his voice. That he should have mistaken me for a great financial magnate controlling some one of these colossal industries, instead of locating me instantly as a staid, gray-haired, and rather impecunious landscape-painter, was quite natural. Others before him have made that same mistake. Why, then, undeceive him? Let it go — he would leave in the morning and go his way, and I should never see him more. So I smoked on, chatting pleasantly and, as was my custom, summing him up.

He was perhaps seventy — smooth-shaven — black — coal-black eyes. Dressed simply in black clothes — not a jewel — no watch-chain even — no rings on his hands but a plain gold one like

a wedding-ring. His dressing-case showed the gentleman. Bottles with silver tops — brushes backed with initials — soap in a silver cup. Red morocco Turkish slippers with pointed toes; embroidered smoking-cap — all appointments of a man of refinement and of means. Tucked beside his razor-case were some books richly bound, and some bundles tied with red tape. Like most educated Russians, he spoke English with barely an accent.

I was not long in arriving at a conclusion. No one would have been — no one of my experience. He was either a despatch-agent connected with the Government, or some lawyer of prominence, who was on his way to Paris to look after the interests of some client of his in Russia. The latter, probably. The only man on the car he seemed to know, besides myself, was the Sleeping-Car Manager, who lifted his hat to him as he passed, and the Ring Master, with whom he stood talking at the door of his compartment. This, however, was before I had brought the Pigeon Charmer into the car.

The cigarette smoked, I was again in the corridor, the bald-headed man holding the door for me to pass out first.

It was now nine o'clock, and we had been under way an hour. I found the Pigeon Charmer

occupying the sofa. The two young Acrobats and the Lightning Calculator were evidently in bed, and the maid, no doubt, busy preparing her mistress's couch for the night. She smiled quite frankly when I approached, and motioned me to a seat beside her. All these professional people the world over have unconventional manners, and an acquaintance is often easily made — at least, that has been my experience.

She began by thanking me in French for my share in getting her such comfortable quarters — dropped into German for a sentence or two, as if trying to find out my nationality — and finally into English, saying, parenthetically, —

"You are English, are you not?"

No financial magnate this time — rather queer, I thought — that she missed that part of my personality. My room-mate had recognized it, even to the extent of calling me "Your Highness."

"No, an American."

"Oh, an American! Yes, I should have known — No, you are not English. You are too kind to be English. An Englishman would not have taken even a little bit of trouble to help us."

I noticed the race prejudice in her tone, but I did not comment on it.

Then followed the customary conversation, I doing most of the talking. I began by telling her

how big our country was ; how many people we had ; how rich the land ; how wealthy the citizens ; how great the opportunities for artists seeking distinction, etc. We all do that with foreigners. Then I tried to lead the conversation so as to find out something about herself — particularly where she could be seen in Paris. She was charming in her travelling-costume — she would be superb in low neck and bare arms, her pets snuggling under her chin, or alighting on her upraised, shapely hands. But either she did not understand, or she would not let me see she did — the last, probably, for most professional people dislike all reference to their trade by non-professionals — they object to be even mentally classed by themselves.

While we talked on, the Dog Woman opened the door of her compartment, knocked at the Dog's door — his Dogship and the maid were inside — patted the brute on his head, and re-entered her compartment and shut the door for the night.

I looked for some recognition between the two members of the same troupe, but my companion gave not the slightest sign that the Dog Woman existed. Jealous, of course, I said to myself. That 's another professional trait.

The Ring Master now passed, raised his hat

and entered his compartment. No sign of recognition ; rather a cold, frigid stare, I thought.

The Sleeping-Car Manager next stepped through the car, lifted his hat when he caught sight of my companion, tiptoed deferentially until he reached the door, and went on to the next car. She acknowledged his homage with a slight bend of her beautiful head, rose from her seat, gave an order in Russian to her English maid who was standing in the door of her compartment, held out her hand to me with a frank good-night, and closed the door behind her.

I looked in on the bald-headed man. He was tucked away in the upper berth sound asleep.

When the next morning I moved up the long platform of the Gare du Nord in search of a cab, I stepped immediately behind the big Danish hound. He was hulking along, his shoulders shaking as he walked, his tongue hanging from his mouth. The Woman had him by a leash, her maid following with the band-boxes, the feather boa, and the parasols. In the crowd behind me walked the bald-headed man, his arm, to my astonishment, through that of the Ring Master's. They both kotowed as they switched off to the baggage-room, the Ring Master bowing even lower than my room-mate.

Then I became sensible of a line of lackeys in livery fringing the edge of the platform, and at their head a most important-looking individual with a decoration on the lapel of his coat. He was surrounded by half a dozen young men, some in brilliant uniforms. They were greeting with great formality my fair companion of the night before! The two Acrobats, the German Calculator, and the English bareback-rider maid stood on one side.

My thought was that it was all an advertising trick of the Circus people, arranged for spectacular effect to help the night's receipts.

While I looked on in wonder, the Manager of the Sleeping-Car Company joined me.

"I must thank you, sir," he said, "for making known to me the outrage committed by one of our porters on the Princess. She is travelling incognito, and I did not know she was on the train until she told me last night who she was. We get the best men we can, but we are constantly having trouble of that kind with our porters. The trick is to give every passenger a whole compartment, and then keep packing them together unless they pay something handsome to be let alone. I shall make an example of that fellow. He is a new one and didn't know me" — and he laughed.

"Do they call her the *Princess?*" I asked. They were certainly receiving her like one, I thought.

"Why, certainly; I thought you knew her," and he looked at me curiously; "the Princess Dolgorouki Sliniski. Her husband, the Prince, is attached to the Emperor's household. She is travelling with her two boys and their German tutor. The old gentleman with the white mustache now talking to her is the Russian Ambassador. And you only met her on the train? Old Azarian told me you knew her intimately."

"Azarian!" I was groping round in the fog now.

"Yes — your room-mate. He is an Armenian and one of the richest bankers in Russia. He lends money to the Czar. His brother got on with you at Cologne. There they go together to look after their luggage — they have an agency here, although their main bank is in St. Petersburg. The brother had the compartment next to that woman with the big dog. She is the wife of a rich brewer in Cologne, and just think — we must always give that brute a compartment when she travels. Is it not outrageous? It is against the rules, but the orders come from up above" — and he jerked his finger meaningly over his shoulder.

The fog was so thick now I could cut it with a knife.

"One moment, please," I said, and I laid my hand on his elbow and looked him searchingly in the eye. I intended now to clear things up. "Was there a circus troupe on the train last night?"

"No." The answer came quite simply, and I could see it was the truth.

"Nor one expected?"

"No. There *was* a circus, but it went through last week."

SAMMY

IT was on the Limited: 10.30 Night Express out of Louisville, bound south to Nashville and beyond.

I had Lower Four.

When I entered the sleeper the porter was making up the berths, the passengers sitting about in each other's way until their beds were ready.

I laid my bag on an empty seat, threw my overcoat over its back, and sat down to face a newspaper within a foot of my nose. There was a man behind it, but he was too intent on its columns to be aware of my presence. I made an inspection of his arms and hands and right leg, the only portions of his surface exposed to view.

I noticed that the hands were strong and well-shaped, their backs speckled with brown spots —too well kept to have guided a plough and too weather-tanned to have wielded a pen. The leg which was crossed, the foot resting on the left knee, was full and sinewy, the muscles of the thigh well developed, and the round of the

calf firmly modelled. The ankle was small and curved like an axe handle and looked as tough.

There are times when the mind lapses into vacancy. Nothing interests it. I find it so while waiting to have my berth made up ; sleep is too near to waste gray matter.

A man's thighs, however, interest me in any mood and at any time. While you may get a man's character from his face, you can, if you will, get his past life from his thigh. It is the walking-beam of his locomotion ; controls his paddles and is developed in proportion to its uses. It indicates, therefore, the man's habits and his mode of life.

If he has sat all day with one leg lapped over the other, arm on chair, head on hand, listening or studying — preachers, professors, and all the other sedentaries sit like this — then the thigh shrinks, the muscles droop, the bones of the ankle bulge, and the knee-joints push through. If he delivers mail, or collects bills, or drives a pack-mule, or walks a tow-path, the muscles of the thigh are hauled taut like cables, the knee-muscles keep their place, the calves are full of knots — one big one in a bunch just below the strap of his knickerbockers, should he wear them.

If he carries big weights on his back — sacks of salt, as do the poor stevedores in Venice ; or coal in gunnies, as do the coolies in Cuba ; or wine in casks, or coffee in bags, then the calves swell abnormally, the thighs solidify; the lines of beauty are lost ; but the lines of strength remain.

If, however, he has spent his life in the saddle, rounding up cattle, chasing Indians, hunting bandits in Mexico, ankle and foot loose, his knees clutched tightly, hugging that other part of him, the horse, then the muscles of the thigh round out their intended lines — the most subtle in the modulating curving of the body. The aboriginal bare-back rider must have been a beauty.

I at once became interested then in the man before me, or rather in his thighs — the "Extra" hid the rest.

I began to picture him to myself — young, blond hair, blue eyes, drooping mustache, slouch hat canted rakishly over one eye ; not over twenty-five years of age. I had thought forty, until a movement of the paper uncovered for a moment his waist-line which curved in instead of out. This settled it — not a day over twenty-five, of course !

The man's fingers tightened on the edges of

the paper. He was still reading, entirely unconscious that my knees were within two inches of his own.

Then I heard this exclamation —

"It 's a damned outrage!"

My curiosity got the better of me — I coughed.

The paper dropped instantly.

"My dear sir," he said, bending forward courteously and laying his hand on my wrist, "I owe you an apology. I had no idea any one was opposite me."

If I was a surprise to him, he was doubly so to me.

My picture had vanished.

He was sixty-five, if a day; gray, with bushy eyebrows, piercing brown eyes, heavy, well-trimmed mustache, strong chin and nose, with fine determined lines about the mouth. A man in perfect health, his full throat browned with many weathers showing above a low collar caught together by a loose black cravat — a handsome, rather dashing sort of a man for one so old.

"I say it is a shame, sir," he continued, "the way they are lynching the negroes around here. Have you read the 'Extra'?" passing it over to me — "Another this morning at Cramptown. It 's an infernal outrage, sir!"

I had read the "Extra," with all its sickening details, and so handed it back to him.

"I quite agree with you," I said; "but this man was a brute."

"No doubt of it, sir. We 've got brutal negroes among us, just as we 've got brutal white men. But that 's no reason why we should hang them without a trial; we still owe them that justice. When we dealt fairly with them there was never any such trouble. There were hundreds of plantations in the South during the war where the only men left were negroes. We trusted our wives and children to them; and yet such outrages as these were unheard of and absolutely impossible. I don't expect you to agree with me, of course; but I tell you, sir, the greatest injustice the North ever did the slave was in robbing him of his home. I am going to have a smoke before going to bed. Won't you join me?"

Acquaintances are quickly made and as quickly ended in a Pullman. Men's ways lie in such diverse directions, and the hours of contact are often so short, that no one can afford to be either ungracious or exclusive. The "buttoned-up" misses the best part of travelling. He is like a camera with the cap on — he never gets a new impression. The man with the shutters of his

ears thrown wide and the lids of his eyes tied back gets a new one every hour.

If, in addition to this, he wears the lens of his heart upon his sleeve, and will adjust it so as to focus the groups around him — it may be a pair of lovers, or some tired mother, or happy child, or lonely wayfarer, or a waif — he will often get a picture of joy, or sorrow, or hope — life dramas all — which will not only enrich the dull hours of travel, but will leave imprints on the mind which can be developed later into the richest and tenderest memories of his life.

I have a way of arranging my own sensitized plates, and I get a certain amount of entertainment out of the process, and now and then a Rembrandt effect whose lights and darks often thrill me for days.

So when this unknown man, with his young legs and his old face, asked me, on one minute's acquaintance, to smoke, I accepted at once.

"I am right about it, my dear sir," he continued, biting off the end of a cigar and sharing with me the lighted match. "The negro is infinitely worse off than in the slave days. We never had to hang any one of them then to make the others behave themselves."

"How do you account for it?" I asked, set-

tling myself in my chair. (We were alone in the smoking-compartment.)

"Account for what?"

"The change that has come over the South — to the negro," I answered.

"The negro has become a competitor, sir. The interests of the black man and the white man now lie apart. Once the white man was his friend; now he is his rival."

His eyes were boring into mine; his teeth set tight.

The doctrine was new to me, but I did not interrupt him.

"It was n't so in the old days. We shared what we had with them. One third of the cabins of the South were filled with the old and helpless. Now these unfortunates are out in the cold; their own people can't help them, and the white man won't."

"Were you a slave-owner?" I asked, not wishing to dispute the point.

"No, sir; but my father was. He had fifty of them on our plantation. He never whipped one of them, and he wouldn't let anybody else strike them, either. There wasn't one of them that wouldn't have come back if we had had a place to put him. The old ones are all dead now, thank God! — all except old Aleck; he's around yet."

"One of your father's slaves, did you say?"

I was tapping away at the door of his recollections, camera all ready.

"Yes; he carried me about on his back when I was so high," and he measured the distance with his hand. "Aleck and I were boys together. I was about eight and he about fifteen when my father got him."

My companion paused, drumming on the leather covering of his chair. I waited, hoping he would at least open his door wide enough to give me a glimpse inside.

"Curiously enough," he went on, "I've been thinking of Aleck all day. I heard yesterday that he was sick again, and it has worried me a good deal. He's pretty feeble now, and I don't know how long he'll last."

He flicked the ashes from his cigar, nursing his knee with the other hand. The leg must have pained him, for I noticed that he lifted it carefully and moved it on one side, as if for greater relief.

"Rheumatism?" I ventured, sympathetically.

"No; just *gets* that way sometimes," he replied, carelessly. "But Aleck's got it bad; can hardly walk. Last time I saw him he was about bent double."

Again he relapsed into silence, smoking quietly.

"And you tell me," I said, "that this old slave was loyal to your family after his freedom?"

He hadn't told me anything of the kind; but I had found his key-hole now, and was determined to get inside his door, even if I picked the lock with a skeleton-key.

"Aleck!" he cried, rousing himself with a laugh; "well, I should say so! Anybody would be loyal who'd been treated as my father treated Aleck. He took him out of jail and gave him a home, and would have looked after him till he died if the war hadn't broken out.

"Aleck was n't raised on our plantation. He was a runaway from North Carolina. There were three of them that got across the river—a man and his wife and Aleck. The slave-driver had caught Aleck in our town and had locked him up in the caboose for safe-keeping. Then he came to my father to help him catch the other two. But my father wasn't that kind of a man. The old gentleman had curious notions about a good many things. He believed when a slave ran away that the fault was oftener the master's than the negro's. 'They are nothing but children,' he would say, 'and you must treat them like children. Whipping is a poor way to bring anybody up.'

"So when my father heard about the three

runaways he refused to have anything to do with the case. This made the driver anxious.

"'Judge,' he said—my father had been a Judge of the County Court for years—'if you'll take the case I'll give you this boy Aleck as a fee. He's worth a thousand dollars.'

"'Send for him,' said my father. 'I'll tell you when I see him.'

"So they brought him in. He was a big, strong boy, with powerful shoulders, black as a chunk of coal, and had a look about him that made you trust him at first sight. My father believed in him the moment he saw him.

"'What did you run away for, Aleck?' he asked.

"The boy held his head down.

"'My mother died, Marster, an' I couldn't stay dar no mo'.'

"'I'll take him,' said my father; 'but on condition that the boy wants to live with me.'

"This was another one of the old gentleman's notions. He would n't have a negro on the place that he had to watch, nor one that was n't happy.

"The driver opened his eyes and laughed; but my father meant what he said, and the papers were made out on those terms. The boy was outside in charge of the sheriff while the papers were

being drawn, and when they were signed the driver brought him in and said,—

"'He 's your property, Judge.'

"'Aleck,' father said, 'you 've heard?'

"'Yes, sah.'

"The boy stood with tears in his eyes. He thought he was going to get a life-sentence. He had never faced a judge before.

"'Well, you 're my property now, and I 've got a proposition to make to you. There 's my horse outside hitched to that post. Get on him and ride out to my plantation, two miles from here; anybody 'll tell you where it is. Talk to my negroes around the quarters, and then go over to Mr. Shandon's and talk to his negroes — find out from any one of them what kind of a master I am, and then come back to me here before sundown and tell me if you want to live with me. If you don't want to live with me you can go free. Do you understand?'

"My father said it all over again. Aleck looked at the driver, then at the sheriff, and then at my father. Then he crept out of the room, got on the mare, and rode up the pike.

"'You 've thrown your money away,' said the driver, shrugging his shoulders. 'You 'll never see that nigger again.'

"The sheriff laughed, and they both went

out. Father said nothing and waited. About an hour before sundown back came Aleck. Father always said he never saw a man change so in four hours. He went out crouching like a dog, his face over his shoulder, scared to death, and he came back with his head up and a snap in his eye, looking as if he could whip his weight in wildcats.

"'I'll go wid ye, an' thank ye all my life,' was all he said.

"Well, it got out around the village, and that night the other two runaways — the man and wife — they were hiding in the town — gave themselves up, and one of our neighbors bought them both and set them to work on a plantation next to ours, and the driver went away happy.

"I was a little fellow then, running around barefooted, but I remember meeting Aleck just as if it were yesterday. He was holding the horse while my father and the overseer stood talking on one side. They were planning his work and where he should sleep. I crept up to look at him. I had heard he was coming and that he was a runaway slave. I thought his back would be bloody and all cut to pieces, and that he 'd have chains on him, and I was disappointed because I could n't see his skin through his shirt and because his hands were free. I must have gotten

too near the mare, for before I knew it he had lifted me out of danger.

"'What 's your name?' I asked.

"'Aleck,' he said; 'an' what 's your name, young master?'

"'Sammy,' I said.

"That 's the way it began between us, and it 's kept on ever since. I call him 'Aleck,' and he calls me 'Sammy'—never anything else, even to-day."

"He calls you 'Sammy'!" I said, in astonishment. The familiarity was new to me between master and slave.

"Yes, always. There is n't another person in the world now that calls me 'Sammy,'" he answered, with a tremor in his voice.

My travelling-companion stopped for a moment, cleared his throat, drew a silver match-safe from his pocket, relighted his cigar, and continued.

"The overseer put Aleck to ploughing the old orchard that lay between the quarters and the house. I sneaked out to watch him as a curious child would, still intent on seeing his wounds. Soon as Aleck saw me, he got a board and nailed it on the plough close to the handle for a seat, and tied up the old horse's tail so it would n't switch in my face, and put me on it, and I never

left that plough till sundown. My father asked Aleck where he had learned that trick, and Aleck told him he used to take his little brother that way before he died.

"After the orchard was ploughed Aleck did n't do a thing but look after me. We fished together and went swimming together; and we hunted eggs and trapped rabbits; and when I got older and had a gun Aleck would go along to look after the dogs and cut down the trees when we were out for coons.

"Once I tumbled into a catfish-hole by the dam, and he fished me out; and once, while he had crawled in after a woodchuck, a rock slipped and pinned him down, and I ran two miles to get help, and fell in a faint before I could tell them where he was. What Aleck had in those days I had, and what I had he had; and there was no difference between us till the war broke out.

"I was grown then, and Aleck was six or seven years older. We were on the border-line, and one morning the Union soldiers opened fire, and all that was left of the house, barns, outbuildings, and negro quarters was a heap of ashes.

"That sent me South, of course, feeling pretty ugly and bitter, and I don't know that I 've gotten over it since. My father was too old to go,

and he and my mother moved into the village and lived in two rooms over my father's office. The negroes, of course, had to shift for themselves, and hard shifting it was — the women and children herding in the towns and the men working as teamsters and doing what they could.

"The night before I left home Aleck crawled out to see me. I was hidden in a hayrick in the lower pasture. He begged me to let him go with me, but I knew father would want him, and he finally gave in and promised to stay with him, and I left. But no one was his own master in those days, and in a few months they had drafted Aleck and carried him off.

"Three years after that my mother fell ill, and I heard of it and came back in disguise, and was arrested as a suspicious character as I entered the town. I did n't blame them, for I looked like a tramp and intended to. The next day I was let out and went home to where my mother and father were living. As I was opening the garden-gate — it was night — Aleck laid his hand on my shoulder. He had on the uniform of a United States soldier. I could n't believe my eyes at first. I had lost track of him, and, as I found out afterward, so had my father. We stood under the street-lamp and he saw the

look in my face and threw his hands up over his head as a negro does when some sudden shock comes to him.

"'Don't turn away f'om me, Sammy,' he cried; 'please don't, Sammy. 'T ain't my fault I got on dese clo'es, 'deed it ain't. Dey done fo'ced me. I heared you was here an' I been tryin' to git to ye all day. Oh, I so glad to git hold ob ye, Sammy, so glad, so glad.' He broke out into sobs of crying. I was near it myself, for he was the first one from home I had seen, and there was something in his voice that went through me.

"Then he unbuttoned his coat, felt in his pocket, pushed something into my hand, and disappeared in the darkness. When I got inside and held it out to the light, he had given me two five-dollar greenbacks!

"I was sitting by my mother the next night about ten o'clock — she would n't let me out of her sight — when there came a rap at the door and Aleck came in. I knew how my father would feel about seeing him in those clothes. I did n't know till afterward that they were all he had and that the poor fellow was as bad off as any of us.

"Father opened upon Aleck right away, just as I knew he would, without giving him a

chance to speak. He upbraided him for going into the army, told him to take his money back, and showed him the door. The old gentleman could be pretty savage when he wanted to, and he did n't spare Aleck a bit. Aleck never said a word — just listened to my father's abuse of him — his hands folded over his cap, his eyes on the two bills lying on the table where my father had thrown them. Then he said, slowly:

" ' Marse Henry, I done hearn ye every word. You don't want me here no mo', an' I 'm gwine away. I ain't a-fightin' agin you an' Sammy an' neber will — it 's 'cause I could n't help it dat I 'm wearin' dese clo'es. As to dis money dat you won't let Sammy take, it 's mine to gib 'cause I saved it up. I gin it to Sammy 'cause I fotched him up an' 'cause he 's as much mine as he is your'n. He 'll tell ye so same 's me. If you say I got to take dat money back I got to do it 'cause I ain't neber dis'beyed ye an' I ain't gwine to begin now. But I don't want yer ter say it, Marse Henry — I don't want yer to say it. You is my marster, I know, but Sammy is my *chile*. An' anudder thing, dey ain't gwine to let him stay in dis town more 'n a day. I found dat out yisterday when I heared he 'd come. Dar ain't no money whar he 's gwine, an' dis money ain't nothin' to me 'cause

I kin git mo' an' maybe Sammy can't. Please, Marse Henry, let Sammy keep dis money. Dere did n't useter be no diff'ence 'tween us, and dere ought n't to be none now.'

"My father did n't speak again — he had n't the heart, and Aleck went out, leaving the money on the table."

Again my companion stopped and fumbled over the matches in his safe, striking one or two nervously and relighting his cigar. It was astonishing how often it went out. I sat with my eyes riveted on his face. I could see now the lines of tenderness about his mouth and I caught certain cadences in his voice which revealed to me but too clearly why the negro loved him and why he must always be only a boy to the old slave. The cigar a-light, he went on: —

"When the war closed I came home and began to pick up my life again. Aleck had gone to Wisconsin and was living in the same town as young Cruger, one of my father's law-students. When my father died, I telegraphed Cruger, inviting him to serve as one of the pall-bearers, and asked him to find Aleck and tell him. I knew he would be hurt if I did n't let him know.

"At two o'clock that night my niece, who was with my mother, rapped at my door. I was

sitting up with my father's body and would go down every hour to see that everything was all right.

"'There 's a man trying to get in at the front door,' she said. I got up at once and went downstairs. I could see the outlines of a man's figure moving in the darkness, but I could not distinguish the features.

"'Who is it?' I asked, throwing open the door and peering out.

"'It 's me, Sammy — it 's Aleck. Take me to my ole marster.'

"He came in and stood where the light fell full upon him. I hardly knew him, he was so changed — much older and bent, and his clothes hung on him in rags.

"I pointed to the parlor-door, and the old man went on tip-toe into the room and stood looking at my father's dead face for a long time — the body lay on a cot. Then he placed his hat on the floor and got down on his knees. There was just light enough to see his figure black against the white of the sheet that covered the cot. For some minutes he knelt motionless, as if in prayer, though no sound escaped him. Then he stretched out his big black hand and passed it over the body, smoothing it gently and patting it tenderly as one would a sleeping

child. By and by he leaned closer to my father's face.

" ' Marse Henry,' I heard him say, ' please, Marse Henry, listen. Dis yere 's Aleck. Yer would n't hear me the las' time but yer got ter hear me now. It 's yo' Aleck, Marster, dat 's who it is. I come soon 's I could, Marse Henry, I did n't wait a minute.' He stopped as if expecting an answer, and went on. ' I ain't neber laid up nothin' agin ye, though, Marse Henry. When ye turned me out dat night in the col' 'cause I had dem soger clo'es on an' did n't want me to gin dat money to Sammy, I knowed how yer felt, but I did n't lay it up agin ye. I ain't neber loved nobody like I loved you, Marse Henry, you an' Sammy. Do yer 'member when I fust come ? 'Member how ye tuk me out o' jail, an' gin me a home ? 'Member how ye nussed me when I was sick, an' fed me when I was hongry, an' put clo'es on me when I was most naked ? Nobody neber trusted me with nothin' till you trusted me, dey jus' beat me an' hunt me. An' don't yer 'member, Marse Henry, de time ye gin me Sammy an' tol' me to take care on him ? you ain't forgot dat day, is yer ? He 's here, Marster; Sammy 's here. He 's settin' outside a-watchin'. Him an' me togedder, same 's we useter was.'

"He got upon his feet, and looked earnestly into the dead face. Then he bent down and picked up one corner of the white sheet, and kissed it reverently. He did not touch the face. When he had tiptoed out of the room, he laid his hand on my shoulder. The tears were streaming down his face: —

"'It was jes' like ye, Sammy, to send fo' me. We knows one anudder, you an' me' — and he turned toward the front door.

"'Where are you going, Aleck?' I asked.

"'I dunno, Sammy — some place whar I kin lay down.'

"'You don't leave here to-night, Aleck,' I said. 'Go upstairs to that room next to mine — you know where it is — and get into that bed.' He held up his hand and began to say he could n't, but I insisted.

"The next morning was Sunday. I saw when he came downstairs that he had done the best he could with his clothes, but they were still pretty ragged. I asked him if he had brought any others, but he told me they were all he had. I did n't say anything at the time, but that afternoon I took him to a clothing store, had it opened as a favor to me, and fitted him out with a suit of black, and a shirt, and shoes, and a hat — everything he wanted — and got him a carpet-

bag, and told Abraham, the clothier, to put Aleck's old things into it, and he would call for them the next day.

"When we got outside, Aleck looked himself all over — along his sleeves, over his waistcoat, and down to his shoes. He seemed to be thinking about something. He would start to speak to me and stop and look over his clothes again, testing the quality with his fingers. Finally he laid his hand on my arm, and, with a curious, beseeching look in his eyes, said: —

"'Sammy, all yesterday, when I was a-comin', I was a-studyin' about it, an' I could n't git it out 'n my mind. It come to me agin when I saw Marse Henry las' night, an' I wanted to tell him. But when I got up dis mawnin' an' see myself I knowed I could n't ask ye, Sammy, an' I did n't. Now I got dese clo'es, it 's come to me agin. I kin ask ye now, an' I don't want ye to 'fuse me. I want ye to let me drive my marster's body to de grave.'

"I held out my hand, and for an instant neither of us spoke.

"'Thank ye, Sammy,' was all he said."

Again my companion's voice broke. Then he went on: —

"When the carriages formed in line I saw Aleck leaning against the fence, and the under-

taker's man was on the hearse. I caught Aleck's eye and beckoned to him.

"'What 's the matter, Aleck? Why are n't you on the hearse?'

"'De undertaker man would n't let me, Sammy; an' I did n't like to 'sturb you an' de mistis.'

"The tears stood in his eyes.

"'Go find him and bring him to me,' I said.

"When he came I told him the funeral would stop where it was if he did n't carry out my orders.

"He said there was some mistake, though I did n't believe it, and went off with Aleck. As we turned out of the gate and into the road I caught sight of the hearse, Aleck on the box. He sat bolt upright, head erect, the reins in one hand, the whip resting on his knee, as I had seen him do so often when driving my father — grave, dignified, and thoughtful, speaking to the horses in low tones, the hearse moving and stopping as each carriage would be filled and driven ahead.

"He would n't drive the hearse back; left it standing at the gate of the cemetery. I heard the discussion, but I could n't leave my mother to settle it.

"'I ain't gwine to do it,' I heard him say to the undertaker. 'It was my marster I was 'tendin' on, not yo' horses. You can drive 'em home yo'self.'"

My companion settled himself in his chair, rested his head on his hand, and closed his eyes. I remained silent, watching him. His cigar had gone out; so had mine. Once or twice a slight quiver crossed his lips, then his teeth would close tight, and again his face would relapse into calm impassiveness.

At this instant the curtains of the smoking-room parted and the Pullman porter entered.

"Your berth 's all ready, Major," said the porter.

My companion rose from his chair, straightened his leg, held out his hand, and said: —

"You can understand now, sir, how I feel about these continued outrages. I don't mean to say that every man is like Aleck, but I do mean to say that Aleck would never have been as loyal as he is but for the way my father brought him up. Good-night, sir."

He was gone before I could do more than express my thanks for his confidence. It was just as well — any further word of mine would have been superfluous. Even my thanks seemed out of place.

In a few minutes the porter returned with, "Lower Four 's all ready, sir."

"All right, I 'm coming. Oh, porter."

"Yes, sir."

"Porter, come closer. Who is that gentleman I 've been talking to?"

"That 's Major Sam Garnett, sir."

"Was he in the war?"

"Yes, sir, he was, for a fact. He was in de cavalry, sir, one o' Morgan's Raiders. Got more 'n six bullets in him now. I jes' done helped him off wid his wooden leg. It was cut off below de knee. His old man Aleck most generally takes care of dat leg. He did n't come wid him dis trip. But he 'll be on de platform in de mornin' a-waitin' for him."

MARNY'S SHADOW

IF you know the St. Nicholas — and if you don't you should make its acquaintance at once — you won't breakfast upstairs in that gorgeous room overlooking the street, where immaculate, smileless waiters move noiselessly about, limp palms droop in the corners, and the tables are lighted with imitation wax candles burning electric wicks hooded by ruby-colored shades, but you will stumble down a dark, crooked staircase to the left of the office desk, push open a swinging green baize door studded with brass tacks, pass a corner of the bar resplendent in cut-glass, and with lowered head slip into a little box of a place built under the sidewalk.

Here of an afternoon thirsty gentlemen sip their cocktails or sit talking by the hour, the smoke from their cigars drifting in long lines out of the open door leading to the bar, and into the caffè beyond. Here in the morning hungry habitués take their first meal — those whose life-tickets are punched with much knowledge of the world, and who, therefore, know how

much shorter is the distance from where they sit to the chef's charcoal fire.

Marny has one of these same ragged life-tickets bearing punch-marks made the world over, and so whenever I journey his way we always breakfast together in this cool, restful retreat, especially of a Sunday morning.

On one of these mornings, the first course had been brought and eaten, the cucumbers and a special mysterious dish served, and I was about to light a cigarette — we were entirely alone — when a well-dressed man pushed open the door, leaned for a moment against the jamb, peered into the room, retreated, appeared again, caught sight of Marny, and settled himself in a chair with his eyes on the painter.

I wondered if he were a friend of Marny's, or whether he had only been attracted by that glow of geniality which seems to radiate from Marny's pores.

The intruder differed but little in his manner of approach from other strangers I had seen hovering about my friend, but to make sure of his identity — the painter had not yet noticed the man — I sent Marny a Marconi message of inquiry with my eyebrows, which he answered in the negative with his shoulders.

The stranger must have read its meaning, for

he rose quickly, and, with an embarrassed look on his face, left the room.

"Wanted a quarter, perhaps," I suggested, laughing.

"No, guess not. He 's just a Diffendorfer. Always some of them round Sunday mornings. That 's a new one, never saw him before. In town overnight, perhaps."

"What 's a Diffendorfer?"

"Did you never meet one?"

"No, never heard of one."

"Oh, yes, you have; you 've seen lots of them."

"Do they belong to any sect?"

"No."

"What are they, then?"

"Just Diffendorfers. Thought I 'd told you about one whom I knew. No? Wait till I light my cigar; it 's a long story."

"Anything to do with the fellow who 's just gone out?"

"Not a thing, though I 'm sure he 's one of them. You 'll find Diffendorfers everywhere. First one I struck was in Venice, some years ago. I can pick them out now at sight." Marny struck a match and lighted his cigar. I drew my cup of coffee toward me and settled myself in my chair to listen.

"You remember that little smoking-room to the right as you enter the Caffè Quadri," he began; "the one off the piazza? Well, a lot of us fellows used to dine there — Whistler, Rico, Old Ziem, Roscoff, Fildes, Blaas, and the rest of the gang.

"Jimmy was making his marvellous pastels that year" (it is in this irreverent way that Marny often speaks of the gods), "and we used to crowd into the little room every night to look them over. We were an enthusiastic lot of Bohemians, each one with an opinion of his own about any subject he happened to be interested in, and ready to back it up if it took all night. Whistler's pastels, however, took the wind out of some of us who thought we could paint, especially Roscoff, who prided himself on his pastels, and who has never forgiven Jimmy to this day.

"Well, one night, Auguste, the head-waiter — you remember him, he used to get smuggled cigarettes for us; that made him suspicious; always thought everybody was a spy — pointed out a man sitting just outside the room on one of the leather-covered seats. Auguste said he came every evening and got as close as he could to our table without attracting attention; close enough, however, to hear every word that was

said. If I knew the man it was all right; if I did n't know him, he suggested that I keep an eye on him.

"I looked around, and saw a heavy-featured, dull-looking man about twenty-five, dressed in a good suit of well-cut clothes, shiny stove-pipe silk hat, high collar with a good deal of necktie, a big pearl pin, and a long gold watch-chain which went all around his neck like an eye-glass ribbon. He had a smooth-shaven face, two keen eyes, a flat nose, square jaw, and a straight line of a mouth.

"I did n't know the man, did n't want to know him, fellows in silk hats not being popular with us, and I did n't keep an eye on him except long enough to satisfy myself that the man was only one of those hungry travellers who was adding to his stock of information by picking up the crumbs of conversation which fell from the tables, and not at all the kind of a person who would hold me or anybody else up in a *sotto portico* or chuck me over a bridge. Then again, I was twenty pounds heavier than he was, and could take care of myself.

"Some nights after this I was dining alone, none of the boys having shown up owing to a heavy rain, when Auguste nudged me, and there sat this stranger within ten feet of my

table. He dropped his eyes when he saw me looking at him, and began turning the sheets of a letter he had in his hand. I was smoking one of Auguste's cigarettes, and checking the menu with a lead-pencil, when it slipped from my hand and rolled between the man's feet. He rose, picked up the pencil, laid it beside my plate, and without a word returned to his seat, that same curious, inquisitive, hungry look on his face you saw a moment ago on that fellow's who has just gone out. Auguste, of course, lost all interest in my dinner. If he was n't after me then he was after him; both meant trouble for Auguste.

"I shifted my chair, opened the 'Gazetta' to serve as a screen, and looked the fellow over. If he were following me around to murder me, as Auguste concluded — he always had some cock-and-bull story to tell — he was certainly very polite about it. I could see that he was not an Italian, neither was he a German nor a Frenchman. He looked more like a well-to-do Dutchman — like one of those young fellows you and I used to see at the Harmonie Club in Dordrecht, or on the veranda of the Amstel, in Amsterdam. They look more like Americans than any other people in Europe.

"The next night I was telling the fellows

some stories, they crowding about to listen, when Auguste whispered in my ear. I turned, and there he was again, his eyes watching every mouthful I swallowed, his ears taking in everything that was said. The other fellows had noticed him now, and had christened him 'Marny's Shadow.' One of them wanted to ask him his business, and fire him into the street if it was n't satisfactory, but I would n't have it. He had said nothing to me or anybody else, nor had he, so far as I knew, followed me when I went out. He had a perfect right to dine where he pleased if he paid for it — and he did — so Auguste admitted, and liberally, too. He could look at whom he pleased. The fact is, that but for Auguste, who was scared white half the time, fearing the Government would get on to his cigarette game, no one would have noticed him. Besides, the fellow might have his own reasons for remaining incog., and if he did we all knew he would n't have been the first one.

"A few days after this I was painting up the Zattere near San Rosario — I was making the sketch for that big Giudecca picture — the one that went to Munich that year — you remember it? — lot of figures around a fruit-stand, with the church on the right and the Giudecca and Lagoon beyond — and had my gondolier Marco

posing some twenty feet away with his back turned toward me, when my mysterious friend walked out from a little *calle* this side of the church, looked at Marco for a moment without turning his head — he did n't see me — and stopped at a door next to old Pietro Varni's wine-shop. He hesitated a moment, looking up and down the Zattere, opened the door with a key which he took from his pocket, and disappeared inside. I beckoned to Marco, and sent him to the wine-shop to find Pietro. When he came (Pietro was agent for the lodging-rooms above, and let them out to swell painters — we could n't afford them — fifty lire a week, some of them more, I said : —

"'Pietro, did you see the chap that went upstairs a few moments ago ?'

"'Yes, signore.'

"'Do you know who he is ?'

"'Yes, he is one of my gentlemen. He has the top floor — the one that Signore Almadi used to live in. The Signore Almadi is gone away.'

"'How long has he been here ?'

"'About a month.'

"'Is he a painter ?'

"'No, I don't think so.'

"'What is he, then ?'

"'Ah, signore, who can tell? At first his letters were sent to me — now he gets them himself. The last were from Monte Carlo, from the Hotel — Hotel — I forget the name. But why does the signore want to know? He pays the rent on the day — that is much better.'

"'Where does he come from?'

"Pietro shrugged his shoulders.

"'That will do, Pietro.'

"There was evidently nothing to be gotten out of him.

"The next day we had another rainstorm — regular deluge. This time it came down in sheets; campos running rivers; gondolas half full of water, everything soaked. I had a room in the top of the Palazzo da Mula on the Grand Canal just above the Salute and within a step of the traghetto of San Giglio. By going out of the rear door and keeping close to the wall of the houses skirting the Fondamenta San Zorzi, I could reach the traghetto without getting wet. The Quadri was the nearest caffè, anyhow, and so I started.

"When I stepped out of the gondola on the other side of the canal and walked up the wooden steps to the level of the Campo, my mysterious friend moved out from under the shadow of the traghetto box and stood where the light from the lantern hanging in front of the Madonna fell upon

his face. His eyes, as usual, were fixed on mine. He had evidently been waiting for me.

"I thought I might just as well end the thing then as at any other time. There was no question now in my mind that the fellow meant business.

"I turned on him squarely.

"'You waiting for me?'

"'Yes.'

"'What for?'

"'I want you to go to dinner with me.'

"'Where?'

"'Anywhere you say.'

"'I don't know you.'

"'Yes, that's what I thought you would say.'

"'Do you know me?'

"'No.'

"'Know my name?'

"'Yes, your name's Marny.'

"'What's yours?'

"'Mine's Diffendorfer.'

"'Where do you want to dine?'

"'Anywhere you say. How will the Quadri do?'

"'In a private room?' I said this to see how he would take it. He still stood in the full glare of the lantern.

"'No, unless you prefer. I would rather dine downstairs — more people there.'

"'All right — lead the way, I 'll follow.'

"It was the worst night that you ever saw. Hardly a soul in the streets. It had set in for a three days' storm, I knew; we always had them in Venice during December. My friend kept right on without looking behind him or speaking to me; over the bridge, through the Campo San Moisè, and so on to the Piazza and the caffè. There were only half a dozen fellows inside when we entered. These greeted me with the yell of welcome we always gave each other on entering, and which this time I did n't return. I knew they would open their eyes when they saw us sit down together, and I did n't want any complications by which I would be obliged to introduce him to anybody. I hated not to be decent, but you see I did n't know but I 'd have to hand him over to the police before I was through with him, and I wanted the responsibility of his acquaintance to devolve on me alone. Roscoff either would n't or did n't take in the situation, for he came up when we were seated, leaned over my chair, and put his arm around my neck. I saw a shade of disappointment cross my companion's face when I did n't present Roscoff to him, but he said nothing. But I could n't help

it — I did n't see anything else to do. Then again, Roscoff was one of those fellows who would never let you hear the end of it if anything went wrong.

"The man looked at the bill of fare steadily for some minutes, pushed it over to me, and said, 'You order.'

"There was nothing gracious in the way he said it—more like a command than anything else. It nettled me for a moment. I don't like your buttoned-up kind of a man that gives you a word now and then as grudgingly as if he were doling out pennies from a pocket-book. But I kept still. Then I was on a voyage of discovery. The tones of his voice jarred on me, I must admit, and I answered him in the same peremptory way. Not that I had any animosity toward him, but so as to meet him on his own ground.

"'Then it will be the regular table d'hôte dinner with a pint of Chianti for each,' I snapped out. 'Will that suit you?'

"'Yes, if you like Chianti.'

"'I do when it's good.'

"'Do you like anything better?' he asked, as if he were cross-questioning me on the stand.

"'Yes.'

"'What?'

"'Well, Valpocelli of '82.' That was the best wine in their cellar, and cost ten lire a bottle.

"'Is there anything better than that?' he demanded.

"'Yes, Valpocelli of '71. *Thirty* lire a bottle. They haven't a drop of it here or anywhere else.'

Auguste, who had been half paralyzed when we sat down, and who, in his bewilderment, had not heard the conversation, reached over and placed the ordinary Chianti included in the price of the dinner at my elbow.

"The man raised his eyes, looked at Auguste with a peculiar expression, amounting almost to disgust, on his face, and said,—

"'I didn't order that. Take that stuff away and bring me a bottle of '82—a quart, mind you—if you haven't the '71.'

"All through the dinner he talked in monosyllables, answering my questions but offering few topics of his own; and although I did my best to draw him out, he made no statement of any kind that would give me the slightest clew as to his antecedents or that would lead up either to his occupation or his purpose in seeking me out. He didn't seem to wish to conceal anything about himself, although of course I asked him no personal questions, nor did he pump me about my affairs. He was just one of those dull, lifeless

conversationalists who must be probed all the time to get anything out of. Before I was half through the dinner I wondered why I had bothered about him at all.

"All this time the fellows were off in one corner watching the whole affair. When Auguste brought the '82, looking like a huge tear bottle dug up from where it had rusted for two thousand years, Roscoff gave a gasp and crossed the room to tell Billy Wood that I had struck a millionnaire who was going to buy everything I had painted, including my big picture for the Salon, all of which was about as close as that idiot Roscoff ever got to anything.

"When the bill was brought, Diffendorfer turned his back to me, took out a roll of bills from his hip-pocket, and passed a new bank-note to Auguste with a contemptuous side wiggle of his forefinger and the remark in English in a tone intended for Auguste's ear alone: 'No change.'

"Auguste laid the bill on his tray and walked up to the desk with a face struggling between joy over the fee and terror for my safety. A fellow who lived on ten-lire wine and who gave money away like water must murder people for a living and have a cemetery of his own in which to bury his dead. He evidently never expected to see me alive again.

"Dinner over and paid for, my host put on his coat, said 'Good-night' with rather an embarrassed air, and without looking at any one in the room — not even Roscoff, who made a move as if to intercept him — Roscoff had some pictures of his own to sell — walked dejectedly out of the caffè and disappeared in the night.

"When I crossed the traghetto the following evening the storm had not abated. It was worse than on the previous night; the wind was blowing a gale and whirling the fog into the narrow streets and choking up the archways and *sotti portici*.

"As my foot touched the flagging of the Campo, Diffendorfer stepped forward and laid his hand on my arm.

"'You are late,' he said. He spoke in the same crisp way he had the night before. Whether it was an assumed air of bravado, or whether it was his natural ugly disposition, I couldn't tell. It jarred on me again, however, and I walked on.

"He stepped quickly in front of me, as if to bar my way, and said, in a gentler tone: —

"'Don't go away. Come dine with me.'

"'But I dined with you yesterday.'

"'Yes, I know — and you hated me afterward. I 'll be better this time.'

"'I did n't hate you, I only' —

"'Yes, you did, and you had reason to. I was n't myself, somehow. Try me again to-day.'

"There was something in his eyes — a troubled, disappointed expression that appealed to me — and so I said, —

"'All right, but on one condition: it's my dinner this time.'

"'And my wine,' he answered, and a satisfied look came into his face.

"'Yes, your wine. Come along.'

"The fellow's blunt, jerky way of speaking had somehow made me speak in the same way. Our talk sounded just like two boys who had had a fight and who were forced to shake hands and make up. My own curiosity as to who he might be, what he was doing in Venice, and why he was pursuing me, was now becoming aroused. That he should again throw himself in my way after the stupid dinner of the night before only deepened the mystery.

"When we got inside, just as we were taking our seats at one of the small tables, in that side room off the street, a shout of laughter came from the next room — the one we fellows always dined in. I had determined to get inside of the fellow at this sitting, and thought the more

retired table better for the purpose. Diffendorfer jumped to his feet on hearing the laughter, peered into the room, and, picking up his wet umbrella, said, 'Let's go in there — more people.' I followed him, and drew out another chair from a table opposite one at which Roscoff, Wood, and two or three of the boys were dining. They all nudged each other when we came in, and a wink went around, but they didn't speak. They behaved precisely as if I had a girl in tow and wanted to be left alone.

"This dinner was exactly like the first one. Diffendorfer ordered the same wine — Valpocelli, '82 — and ate each course that Auguste brought him, with only a word now and then about the weather, the number of people in Venice, and the dishes. The only time when his face lighted up was when a chap named Cruthers, from Munich, who arrived that morning and who hadn't been in Venice for years, came up and slapped me on the back and hollered out as he dragged up a chair and sat down beside me: 'Glad to see you, old man; what are you drinking?'

"I reached for the '82 — there was only a glass left — and was moving the bottle within reach of my friend's hand when Diffendorfer said to Auguste, 'Bring another quart of '82;' then he turned and said to the Munich chap, 'Sorry,

sir, it is n't the '71, but they have n't a bottle in the house.'

"I was up a tree, and so I said, 'Cruthers, let me present you to my friend, Mr. Diffendorfer.' My companion at mention of his name sprang up, seized Cruthers's fingers as if he had been a long-lost brother, and pretty nearly shook his hand off. Cruthers said in reply, 'I 'm very glad to meet you. If you 're a friend of Marny's you 're all right. You 've got all you ought to have in this world.' You must have known Cruthers — he was always saying that kind of frilly things to the boys. Then they both sat down again.

"After this quite a different expression came into the man's face. His embarrassment, or ugliness of temper, or whatever it was, was gone. He jumped up again, insisted upon filling Cruthers's glass himself, and when Cruthers tasted it and winked both of his eyes over it, and then got up and shook Diffendorfer's hand a second time to let him know how good he thought it was, and how proud he was of being his guest, Diffendorfer's face even broke out into a smile, and for a moment the fellow was as happy as anybody about him, and not the chump he had been with me. He was evidently pleased with Cruthers, for when Cruthers refused a third glass he said

to him, 'To-morrow, perhaps'—and, beckoning to Auguste, said, in a voice loud enough for us all to hear, 'Put a cork in it and mark it; we 'll finish it to-morrow.'

"Cruthers made no reply, not considering himself, of course, as one of the party, and, nodding pleasantly to my companion, joined Wood's table again.

"When dinner was over, Diffendorfer put on his hat and coat, handed me my umbrella, and said, 'I 'm going home now. Walk along with me?'

"It was still raining, the wind rattling the swinging doors of the caffè. I did not answer for a moment. The dinner had left me as much in the dark as ever, and I was trying to make up my mind what to do next.

"'Why not stay here and smoke?' I asked.

"'No, walk along with me as far as the traghetto, please,' and he laid his hand in a half-pleading way on my arm.

"Again that same troubled look in his face that I had seen once before made me alter my mind. I threw on my coat, picked up my umbrella, nodded to the boys, who looked rather anxiously after me, and plunged through the door and out into the storm.

"It was the kind of a night that I love,—a

regular howler. Most people think the sunshine makes Venice, but they would n't think so if they could study it on one of these nights when a nor'easter whirls up out of the Adriatic and comes roaring across the lagoons as if it would swallow up the dear old girl and sweep her into the sea. She don't mind it. She always comes up smiling the next day, looking twice as pretty for her bath, and I 'm always twice as happy, for I 've seen a whole lot of things I never would have seen in the daylight. The Campanile, for one thing, upside down in the streaming Piazza; slashes of colored light from the shop-windows soaking into the rain-pools; and great, black, gloomy shadows choking up alleys, with only a single taper peering out of the darkness like a burglar's lantern.

"When we turned to breast the gale — the rain had almost ceased — and struggled on through the Ascensione, a sudden gust of wind whirled my umbrella inside out, and after that I walked on ahead of him, stopping every now and then to enjoy the grandeur of it all, until we reached the traghetto. When we arrived, only one gondola was on duty, the gondolier muffled to his eyes in glistening oilskins, his sou'wester hat tied under his chin.

"Once on the other side of the Canal it started

[illegible] Differendorfer held his own [illegible] over me until we reached my gate on the [illegible] in the rear of my quarters. He stood beside me under the flare of the gas-[illegible] while I [illegible] in my pocket for my [illegible] — I had almost decided to invite him in and [illegible] him dry — and then said, [illegible] a little way from here; don't go in; come home with me.

"A strange feeling now took possession of me, which I could not account for. The whole plot rushed over me with a force which I must confess sent a cold chill down my back. I began to think: This man had forced himself upon me not once, but twice; had set up the best bottle of wine he could buy, and was now about to steer me into a den. Then the thought rose in my mind — I could handle any two of him, and if I give way now and he finds I am overcautious or suspicious, it will only make it worse for me when I see him again. This was followed by a common-sense view of the whole situation. The mystery in it, after all, if there was any mystery, was one of my own making. To ask a man who had been dining with you to come to your lodging was neither a suspicious nor an unusual thing. Besides, while he had been often brusque, and at times curt, he had shown me

nothing but kindness, and had tried only to please me.

"My mind was made up instantly. I determined to follow the affair to the end.

"'Yes, I 'll go,' and I pulled my umbrella into shape, opened it with a flop, and stepped from the shelter of the doorway into the pelt of the driving rain.

"We kept on up the Fondamenta, crossed the bridge by the side of the Canal of San Vio as far as the Caffè Calcina, and then out on the Zattere, which was being soused with the waves of the Giudecca breaking over the coping of its pavement. Hugging the low wall of Clara Montalba's garden, he keeping out of the wind as best he could, we passed the church of San Rosario and stopped at the same low door opening into the building next to Pietro's wine-shop — the one I had seen him enter when I was painting. The caffè was still open, for the glow of its lights streamed out upon the night and was reflected in the rain-drenched pavement. Then a thought struck me. 'Come in here a moment,' I said to him, and I pushed in Pietro's door.

"'Pietro,' I called out, so that everybody in the caffè could hear, 'I 'm going up to Mr. Diffendorfer's room. Better get a fiasco of Chianti ready — the old kind you have in the

cellar. When I want it I 'll send for it.' If I was going into a trap it was just as well to let somebody know whom I was last seen with. The boys had seen me go out with him, but nobody knew where he lived or where he had taken me. I was ashamed of it as soon as I had said it, but somehow I felt as if it were just as well to keep my eyes open.

" Diffendorfer pushed past me and called out to Pietro, in a half-angry tone, ' No, don't you send it. I 've got all the wine we 'll want,' turned on his heel, held his door open for me to pass in, and slammed it behind us.

" It was pitch-dark inside as we mounted the stairs one step at a time until we reached the second flight, where the light from a smouldering wick of a fiorentina set in a niche in the wall shed a dim glow. At the sound of our footsteps a door was opened in a passageway on our left, a head thrust out, and as suddenly withdrawn. The same thing happened on the third landing. Diffendorfer paid no attention to these intrusions, and kept on down a long corridor ending in a door. I did n't like the heads — it looked as if they were waiting for Diffendorfer to bring somebody home, and so I slipped my umbrella along in my hand until I could use it as a club, and waited in the dark until he had found the key-

hole, unlocked the door, and thrown it open. All I saw was the gray light of the windows opposite this door, which made a dim silhouette of Diffendorfer's figure. Then I heard the scraping of a match, and a gas-jet flashed.

"'Come in,' called Diffendorfer, in a cheery tone. 'Wait till I punch up the fire. Here, take this seat,' and he moved a great chair close to the grate.

"I have seen a good many rooms in my time, but I must say this one took the breath out of me for an instant. The walls were hung in old tapestries, the furniture was of the rarest. There were three or four old armchairs that looked as if they had been stolen out of the Doge's Palace.

"Diffendorfer continued punching away at the fire until it burst into a blaze. In another moment he was on his feet again, saying he had forgotten something. Then he entered the next room — there were three in the suite — unlocked a closet, brought back a mouldy-looking bottle and two Venetian glasses, moved up a spider-legged, inlaid table, and said, as he placed the bottle and glasses beside me, 'That 's the Valpocelli of '71. You need n't worry about helping yourself; I 've got a dozen bottles more.'

"I thought the game had gone far enough now, and I squared myself and faced him.

"'See here, Mr. Diffendorfer,' I said, 'before I take your wine I 've got some questions to ask you. I 'm going to ask them pretty straight, too, and I want you to answer them exactly in the same way. You have followed me round now for two weeks. You invite me to dinner — a man you have never seen before — and when I come you sit like a bump on a log, and half the time I can't get a word out of you. You spend your money on me like water — none of which I can return, and you know it — and when I tell you I don't like that sort of thing you double the expense. Now, what does it all mean? Who are you, anyway, and where do you come from? If you 're all right there 's my hand, and you 'll find it wide open.'

"He dropped into his chair, put his head into his hands for a moment, and said, in a greatly altered tone, —

"'If I told you, you would n't understand.'

"'Yes, I would.'

"'No, you would n't — you could n't. You've had everything you wanted all your life — I have n't had anything.'

"'Me! — what rot! You 've got a chair under you now that will sell for more money than I see in a year.'

"'Yes — and nobody to sit in it; not a man who knows me or wants to know me.'

"'But why did you pick me out?'

"'Because you seemed to be the kind of a man who would understand me best. I watched you for weeks, though you did n't know it. You 've got people who love you for yourself. You go into Florian's or the Quadri and you can't get a chance to swallow a mouthful for fellows who want to shake hands with you and slap you on the back. When I saw that, I got up courage enough to speak to you.

"'When that first night you would n't introduce me to your friend Roscoff, I saw how it was and how you suspected me, and I came near giving it up. Then I thought I 'd try again, and if you had n't introduced Mr. Cruthers to me, and if he had n't drank my wine, I would have given it up. But I don't want them to like me because I 'm with *you*. I want them to like me for myself, so they 'll be glad to see me when I come in, just as they are glad to see you.

"'I come from Pennsylvania. My father owns the oil-wells at Stockville. He came over from Holland when he was a boy. He sent me over here six months ago to learn something about the world, and told me not to come back till I did. I got to Paris, and I could n't find a soul to

talk to but the hotel porter; then I kept on to Lucerne, and it was no better there. When I got as far as Dresden I mustered up courage to speak to a man in the station, but he moved off, and I saw him afterward speaking to a policeman and pointing to me. Then I came on down here. I thought maybe if I got some good rooms to live in where people could be comfortable, I could get somebody to come in and sit down. So I bought this lot of truck of an Italian named Almadi — a prince or something — and moved in. I tried the fellows who lived here — you saw them sticking their heads out as we came up — but they don't speak English, so I was as bad off as I was before. Then I made up my mind I 'd tackle you and keep at it till I got to know you. You might think it queer now that I did n't tell you before who I was or how I came here, or how lonesome I was — just lonesome — but I just could n't. I did n't want your pity, I wanted your *friendship*. That 's all.'

"He had straightened up now, and was leaning back in his chair.

"'And it was just dead lonesomeness, then, was it?' and I held out my hand to him.

"'Yes — the deadliest kind of lonesome. Kind makes you want to fall off a dock. Now, please drink my wine' — and he pushed the bottle to-

ward me — 'I had a devil of a hunt for it, but I wanted to do something for you you could n't do for yourself.'

"We fellows, I tell you, took charge of Diffendorfer after that, and a ripping good fellow he was. We got that high collar off of him, a slouch hat on his head instead of his stove-pipe, and a pipe in his mouth, and before the winter was over he had more friends than any fellow in Venice. It was only awkwardness that made him talk so queer and ugly. And maybe we did n't have some good times in those rooms of his on the Zattere!"

Marny stopped, threw away the end of his cigar, laid a coin under his plate for the waiter and another on top of it for Henri, the chef, reached for his hat, and said, as he rose from his seat, and flecked the ashes from his coat-sleeve: —

"So now, whenever I see a poor devil haunting a place like this, looking around out of the corner of his eye, hoping somebody will speak to him, I say that's a Diffendorfer, and more than half the time I'm right."

MUFFLES — THE BAR-KEEP

I

MY friend Muffles has had a varied career. Muffles is not his baptismal name — if he were ever baptized, which I doubt. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, and the brewer — especially the brewer — knew him as Mr. Richard Mulford, proprietor of the Shady Side on the Bronx — and his associates as Dick. Only his intimates knew him as Muffles. I am one of his intimates. This last sobriquet he earned as a boy among his fellow wharf-rats, by reason of an extreme lightness of foot attended by an equally noiseless step, particularly noticeable when escaping from some guardian of the peace who had suddenly detected him raiding an apple-stand not his own, or in depleting a heap of peanuts the property of some gentleman of foreign birth, or in making off with a just-emptied ash-barrel — Muffles did the emptying — on the eve of an election.

If any member of his unknown and widely scattered family reached the dignity of being

considered the flower of the clan, no stretch of imagination or the truth on the part of his acquaintances — and they were numerous — ever awarded that distinction to Muffles. He might have been a weed, but he was never a flower. A weed that grew up between the cobbles, crouching under the hoofs of horses and the tramp of men, and who was pulled up and thrown aside and still lived on and flourished in various ways, and all with that tenacity of purpose and buoyancy of spirit which distinguishes all weeds and which never by any possibility marks a better quality of plant, vegetable or animal.

The rise of this gamin from the dust-heap to his present lofty position was as interesting as it was instructive. Interesting because his career was a drama — instructive because it showed a grit, pluck, and self-denial which many of his contemporaries might have envied and imitated: wharf-rat, newsboy, dish-washer in a sailor's dive, bar-helper, bar-tender, bar-keeper, bar-owner, ward heeler, ward politician, clerk of a district committee — go-between, in shady deals, between those paid to uphold the law and those paid to break it — and now, at this time of writing, or was a year or so ago, the husband of "the Missus," as he always calls her, the father of two children, one three and the other five, and

the proprietor of the Shady Side Inn, above the Harlem River and within a stone's throw of the historic Bronx.

The reaching of this final goal, the sum of all his hopes and ambitions, was due to the same tenacity of purpose which had characterized his earlier life, aided and abetted by a geniality of disposition which made him countless friends, a conscience which overlooked their faults, together with a total lack of perception as to the legal ownership of whatever happened to be within his reach. As to the keeping of the other commandments, including the one of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you ——

Well, Muffles had grown up between the cobbles of the Bowery, and his early education had consequently been neglected.

The Shady Side Inn, over which Muffles presided, and in which he was one-third owner — the Captain of the Precinct and a "Big Pipe" contractor owned the other two thirds — was what was left of an old colonial mansion. There are dozens of them scattered up and down the Bronx, lying back from the river; with porches falling into decay, their gardens overrun with weeds, their spacious rooms echoing only the hum of the sewing-machine or the buzz of the room.

This one belonged to some one of the old Knickerbockers whose winter residence was below Bleecker Street and who came up here to spend the summer and so escape the heat of the dog-days. You can see it any day you drive up the Speedway. It has stood there for over a hundred years and is likely to continue. You know its history, too — or can, if you will take the trouble to look up its record. Aaron Burr stopped here, of course — he stopped about everywhere along here and slept in almost every house ; and Hamilton put his horse up in the stables — only the site remains ; and George Washington dined on the back porch, his sorrel mare tied to one of the big trees. There is no question about these facts. They are all down in the books, and I would prove it to you if I could lay my hand on the particular record. Everybody believes it — Muffles most of all.

Many of the old-time fittings and appurtenances are still to be seen. A knocker clings to the front door — a wobbly old knocker, it is true, with one screw gone and part of the plate broken — but still boasting its colonial descent. And there is a half-moon window over the door above it, with little panes of glass held in place by a spidery parasol frame, and supported on spindling columns once painted white. And there

is an old lantern in the hall and funny little banisters wreathed about a flight of stairs that twists itself up to the second floor.

The relics — now that I come to think of it — stop here. There was a fine old mantel framing a great open fireplace in the front parlor, before which the Father of His Country toasted his toes or sipped his grog, but it is gone now. Muffles's bar occupied the whole side of this front room, and the cavity once filled with big, generous logs, blazing away to please the host's distinguished guests, held a collection of bottles from Muffles's cellar — a moving cellar, it is true, for the beer-wagon and the grocer's cart replenished it daily.

The great garden in the rear of the old mansion has also changed. The lines of box and sweet syringa are known only by their roots. The rose-beds are no more, the paths that were woven into long stripes across its grass-plats are overgrown and hardly traceable. Only one lichen-covered, weather-stained seat circling about an old locust-tree remains, and this is on its last legs and needs propping up — or did the last time I saw it. The trees are still there. These old stand-bys reach up their arms so high, and their trunks are so big and straight and smooth, that nothing can despoil them. They will stay there

until the end — that is, until some merciless Commissioner runs the line of a city street through their roots. Then their fine old bodies will be drawn and quartered, and their sturdy arms and lesser branches go to feed the fires of some near-by factory.

No ladies of high degree now sip their tea beneath their shade, with liveried servants about the slender-legged tables, as they did in the old days. There are tables, of course — a dozen in all, perhaps, some in white cloths and some in bare tops, bare of everything except the glass of beer — it depends very largely on what one orders, and who orders it — but the servants are missing unless you count Muffles and his stable-boy. Two of these old aristocrats — I am speaking of the old trees now, not Muffles, and certainly not the stable-boy — two giant elms (the same that Washington tied his mare to when they were little) — stand guard on either side of the back porch, a wide veranda of a porch with a honeysuckle, its stem as thick as your arm, and its scraggy, half-dead tendrils plaited in and out of the palings and newly painted lattice-work.

On Sunday mornings — and this tale begins with a Sunday morning — Muffles always shaved himself on this back porch. On these occasions

he was attired in a pair of trousers, a pair of slippers, and a red flannel undershirt.

I am aware that this is not an extraordinary thing for a man living in the country to do on a Sunday morning, and it is not an extraordinary costume in which to do it. It was neither the costume nor the occupation that made the operation notable, but the distinguished company who sat around the operator while it went on.

There was the ex-Sheriff — a large, bulbous man with a jet-black mustache hung under his nose, a shirt-collar cut low enough to permit of his breathing, and a skin-tight waistcoat buttoned over a rotundity that rested on his knees. He had restless, quick eyes, and, before his "ex" life began and his avoirdupois gained upon him, restless, quick fingers with steel springs inside of them — good fingers for handling the particular people he "wanted."

Then there was the "Big Pipe" contractor — a lean man with half-moon whiskers, a red, weather-beaten, knotted face, bushy gray eyebrows, and a clean-shaven mouth that looked when shut like a healed scar. On Sunday this magnate wore a yellow diamond pin and sat in his shirt-sleeves.

There could be found, too, now and then, tilted back on their chairs, two or three of the light-

fingered gentry from the race-course near by — pale, consumptive-looking men, with field-glasses hung over their shoulders and looking like bank-clerks, they were so plainly and neatly dressed; as well as some of the less respectable neighbors, besides a few intimate personal friends like myself.

While Muffles shaved and the group about him discussed the several ways—some of them rather shady, I'm afraid—in which they and their constituents earned their daily bread, the stable-boy—he was a street waif, picked up to keep him from starving — served the beverages. Muffles had no Sunday license, of course, but a little thing like that never disturbed Muffles or his friends — not with the Captain of the Precinct as part owner.

My intimacy with Muffles dated from a visit I had made him a year before, when I stopped in one of my sketching-tramps to get something cooling. A young friend of mine—a musician—was with me. Muffles's garden was filled with visitors; some celebration or holiday had called the people out. Muffles, in expectation, had had the piano tuned and had sent to town for an orchestra of three. The cornet and bass-viol had put in an appearance, but the pianist had been lost in the shuffle.

"De bloke ain't showed up and we can't git nothin' out o' de fish-horn and de scrape—see?" was the way Muffles put it.

My friend was a graduate of the Conservatoire, an ex-stroke, crew of '91, owned a pair of shears which he used twice a year in the vaults of a down-town bank, and breakfasted every day at twelve—but none of these things had spoiled him.

"Don't worry," he said; "put a prop under your piano-lid and bring me a chair. I'll work the ivories for you."

He played till midnight, drank his free beers between each selection, his face as grave as a judge except when he would wink at me out of the corner of his eye to show his intense enjoyment of the whole situation. You can judge of its effect on the audience when I tell you that one young girl in a pink shirt-waist was so overcome with emotion and so sorry for the sad young man who had to earn his living in any such way, that she laid a ten-cent piece on the piano within reach of my friend's fingers. The smile of intense gratitude which permeated his face, a "thank-God-you-have-saved-me-from-starvation" smile, was part of the evening's enjoyment. He wears the dime now on his watch-chain; he says it is the only money he ever earned by his music; to

which one of his club friends added, "Or in your life."

Since that time I have been *persona grata* to Muffles. Since that time, too, I have studied him at close range: on snowy days—for I like my tramps in winter, with the Bronx a ribbon of white, even though it may be too cold to paint—as well as my outings on Sunday summer mornings when I sit down with his other friends to watch Muffles shave.

On one of these days I found a thin, cadaverous, long-legged, long-armed young man behind the bar. He had yellow-white hair that rested on his head like a window-mop, whitey blue eyes, and a pasty complexion. When he craned his neck in his anxiety to get my order right, I felt that his giraffe throat reached down to his waistline and that all of it would come out of his collar if I didn't make up my mind at once "what it should be."

"Who's he, Muffles?" I asked.

"Dat's me new bar-keep. I've chucked me job."

"What's his name?"

"Bowser."

"Where did you get him?"

"Blew in here one night las' month, purty nigh froze—out of a job and hungry. De Missus

got soft on him —she's dat kind, ye know. Yer oughter seen him eat! Well, I guess! Been in a littingrapher's shop—ye kin tell by his fingers. Say, Bowser, show de gentleman yer fingers."

Bowser held them up as quickly as if the order had come down the barrel of a Winchester.

"And ye oughter see him draw. Gee! if I could draw like him I wouldn't do nothin' else. But I ain't never had nothin' in my head like that. A feller's got to have sumpin' besides schoollarnin' to draw like him. Now you're a sketch-artist, and know. Why, he drawed de Sheriff last Sunday sittin' in de porch huggin' his bitters, to de life. Say, Bowse, show de gentleman de picter ye drawed of de Sheriff."

Bowser slipped his hand under the bar and brought out a charcoal sketch of a black mustache surrounded by a pair of cheeks, a treble chin, and two dots of eyes.

"Kin hear him speak, can't ye? And dat ain't nothin' to de way he kin print. Say, Bowse"—the intimacy grew as the young man's talents loomed up in Muffles's mind—"tell de gentleman what de boss said 'bout yer printin'."

"Said I could print all right, only there warn't no more work." There was a modesty in Bowser's tone that gave me a better opinion of him.

"Said ye could print all right, did he?

Course he did—and no guff in it, neither. Say, Missus"—and he turned to his wife, who had just come in, the youngest child in her arms. She weighed twice as much as Muffles—one of those shapeless women with a kindly, Alderney face, and hair never in place, who lets everything go from collar to waist-line.

"Say, Missus, didn't de Sheriff say dat was a perfec' likeness?" And he handed it to her.

The wife laughed, passed it back to Muffles, and, with a friendly nod to me, kept on to the kitchen.

"Bar-room ain't no place for women," Muffles remarked in an undertone when his wife had disappeared. "Dat's why de Missus ain't never 'round. And when de kids grow up we're goin' to quit, see? Dat's what de Missus says, and what she says goes!"

All that summer the Shady Side prospered. More tables were set out under the trees; Bowser got an assistant; Muffles wore better clothes; the Missus combed out her hair and managed to wear a tight-fitting dress, and it was easy to see that fame and fortune awaited Muffles—or what he considered its equivalent. Muffles entertained his friends as usual on the back porch on Sunday mornings, but he shaved himself upstairs and wore an alpaca coat and boiled shirt over his red

flannel underwear. The quality of the company improved, too—or retrograded, according to the point of view. Now and then a pair of deer, with long tails and manes, hitched to a spider-web of a wagon, would drive up to the front entrance and a gentleman wearing a watch-chain, a solitaire diamond ring, a polished silk hat, and a white overcoat with big pearl buttons, would order "a pint of fizz" and talk in an undertone to Muffles while he drank it. Often a number of these combinations would meet in Muffles's back room and a quiet little game would last until daylight. The orders then were for quarts, not pints. On one of these nights the Captain of the Precinct was present in plain clothes. I learned this from Bowser—from behind his hand.

One night Muffles was awakened by a stone thrown at his bedroom window. He went downstairs and found two men in slouch hats; one had a black carpet-bag. They talked some time together, and the three went down into the cellar. When they came up the bag was empty.

The next morning one of those spider-wheeled buggies, driven by one of the silk hat and pearl-buttoned gentlemen, accompanied by a friend, stopped at the main gate. When they drove away they carried the contents of the black carpet-bag stowed away under the seat.

The following day, about ten o'clock in the morning, a man in a derby hat and with a pair of handcuffs in his outside pocket showed Muffles a paper he took from his coat, and the two went off to the city. When Muffles returned that same night—I had heard he was in trouble and waited for his return—he nodded to me with a smile, and said,—

"It's all right. Pipes went bail."

He didn't stop, but walked through to the back room. There he put his arms around his wife. She had sat all day at the window watching for his return, so Bowser told me.

II

One crisp, cool October day, when the maples blazed scarlet and the Bronx was a band of polished silver and the hoar-frost glistened in the meadows, I turned into the road that led to the Shady Side. The outer gate was shut, and all the blinds on the front of the house were closed. I put my hand on the old brass knocker and rapped softly. Bowser opened the door. His eyes looked as if he had not slept for a week.

"What's the matter—anybody sick?"

"No—dead!" and he burst into tears.

"Not Muffles!"

"No—the Missus."

"When?"

"Last night. De boss is inside, all broke up."

I tiptoed across the hall and into the bar-room. He was sitting by a table, his head in his hands, his back toward me.

"Muffles, this is terrible! How did it happen?"

He straightened up and held out his hand, guiding me to a seat beside him. For some minutes he did not speak. Then he said, slowly, ignoring my question, the tears streaming down his cheeks: —

"Dis ends me. I ain't no good widout de Missus. You thought maybe when ye were 'round that I was a-runnin' things; you thought maybe it was me that was lookin' after de kids and keepin' 'em clean; you thought maybe when I got pinched and they come near jugging me that some of me pals got me clear—you don't know nothin' 'bout it. De Missus did that, like she done everything."

He stopped as if to get his breath, and put his head in his hands again—rocking himself to and fro like a man in great physical pain. I sat silent beside him. It is difficult to decide what to do or say to a man under such circumstances.

His reference to some former arrest arose in my mind, and so, in a perfunctory way—more for something to say than for any purpose of prying into his former life—I asked: —

"Was that the time the Pipe Contractor went bail for you?"

He moved his head slightly and without raising it from his hands looked at me from over his clasped fingers.

"What, dat scrape a month ago, when I hid dem goods in de cellar? Naw! Dat was two pals o' mine. Dey was near pinched and I helped 'em out. Somebody give it away. But dat ain't nothin'—Cap'n took care o' dat. Dis was one o' me own five year ago. What's goin' to become o' de kids now?" And he burst out crying again.

III

A year passed.

I had been painting along the Thames, lying in my punt, my face up to the sky, or paddling in and out among the pond-lilies. I had idled, too, on the lagoons of my beloved Venice, listening to Luigi crooning the songs he loves so well, the soft air about me, the plash of my gondolier's oar wrinkling the sheen of the silver sea.

It had been a very happy summer; full of color and life. The brush had worked easily, the weather had lent a helping hand; all had been peace and quiet. Ofttimes, when I was happiest, somehow Muffles's solitary figure rose before me, the tears coursing down his cheeks, and with it that cold silence — a silence which only a dead body brings to a house and which ends only with its burial.

The week after I landed — it was in November, a day when the crows flew in long wavy lines and the heavy white and gray clouds pressed close upon the blue vista of the hills — I turned and crossed through the wood, my feet sinking into the soft carpet of its dead leaves. Soon I caught a glimpse of the chimneys of Shady Side thrust above the evergreens; a curl of smoke was floating upward, filling the air with a filmy haze. At this sign of life within, my heart gave a bound.

Muffles was still there!

When I swung back the gate and mounted the porch a feeling of uncertainty came over me. The knocker was gone, and so was the sign. The old-fashioned window-casings had been replaced by a modern door newly painted and standing partly open. Perhaps Muffles had given up the bar and was living here alone with his children.

I pushed open the door and stepped into the old-fashioned hall. This, too, had undergone changes. The lantern was missing, and some modern furniture stood against the walls. The bar where Bowser had dispensed his beverages and from behind which he had brought his drawings had been replaced by a long mahogany counter with marble top, the sideboard being filled with cut-glass and the more expensive appointments of a modern establishment. The tables and chairs were also of mahogany; and a new red carpet covered the floor. The proprietor was leaning against the counter playing with his watch-chain —a short man with a bald head. A few guests were sitting about, reading or smoking.

"What's become of Mulford," I asked; "Dick Mulford, who used to be here?"

The man shook his head.

"Why, yes, you must have known him — some of his friends called him Muffles."

The man continued to shake his head. Then he answered, carelessly, —

"I've only been here six months — another man had it before me. He put these fixtures in."

"Maybe you can tell me?" — and I turned to the bar-keeper.

"Guess he means the feller who blew in here first month we come," the bar-keeper answered,

addressing his remark to the proprietor. "He said he 'd been runnin' the place once."

"Oh, you mean that guy! Yes, I got it now," answered the proprietor, with some animation, as if suddenly interested. "He come in the week we opened — worst-lookin' bum you ever see — toes out of his shoes, coat all torn. Said he had no money and asked for something to eat. Billy here was goin' to fire him out when one of my customers said he knew him. I don't let no man go hungry if I can help it, and so I sent him downstairs and cook filled him up. After he had all he wanted to eat he asked Billy if he might go upstairs into the front bedroom. I don't want nobody prowlin' 'round — not that kind, anyhow — but he begged, so I sent Billy up with him. What did he do, Billy? You saw him." And he turned to his assistant.

"Did n't do nothin' but just look in the door. He held on to the jamb and I thought he was goin' to fall. Then he said he was much obliged, and he walked downstairs again and out the door cryin' like a baby, and I ain't seen him since."

Another year passed. To the picture of the man sitting alone in that silent, desolate room was added the picture of the man leaning against the jamb of the door, the tears streaming down his face. After this I constantly caught myself peering

into the faces of the tramps I would meet in the street. Whenever I walked before the benches of Madison Park or loitered along the shady paths of Union Square, I would stop, my eye running over the rows of idle men reading the advertisements in the morning papers or asleep on the seats. Often I would pause for a moment as some tousled vagabond would pass me, hoping that I had found my old-time friend, only to be disappointed. Once I met Bowser on his way to his work, a roll of theatre-bills under his arm. He had gone back to his trade and was working in a shop on Fourteenth Street. His account of what had happened after the death of "the Missus" only confirmed my fears. Muffles had gone on from bad to worse; the place had been sold out by his partners; Muffles had become a drunkard, and, worse than all, the indictment against him had been pressed for trial despite the Captain's efforts, and he had been sent to the Island for a year for receiving and hiding stolen goods. He had been offered his freedom by the District Attorney if he would give up the names of the two men who had stolen the silverware, but he said he 'd rather "serve time than give his pals away," and they sent him up. Some half-orphan asylum had taken the children. One thing Bowser knew and he would "give it to me straight,"

and he did n't care who heard it, and that was that there was "a good many gospil sharps running church-mills that warn't half as white as Dick Mulford — not by a d—— sight."

One morning I was trying to cross Broadway, dodging the trolleys that swirled around the curves, when a man laid his hand on my arm with a grip that hurt me.

It was Muffles!

Not a tramp; not a ragged, blear-eyed vagabond — older, more serious, the laugh gone out of his eyes, the cheeks pale as if from long confinement. Dressed in dark clothes, his face clean-shaven; linen neat, a plain black tie — the hat worn straight, not slouched over his eyes with a rakish cant as in the old days.

"My God! but I 'm glad to see ye," he cried. "Come over in the Square and let 's set down."

He was too excited to let me ask him any questions. It all poured out of him in a torrent, his hand on my knee most of the time.

"Oh, but I had it tough! Been up for a year. You remember about it, the time Pipes went bail. I did n't git none o' the swag; it warn't my job, but I seed 'em through. But that warn't nothin'. It was de Missus what killed me. Had n't been for de kids I 'd been off the dock many a time. Fust month or two I did n't draw a sober breath.

I could n't stand it. Soon 's I 'd come to I 'd git to thinkin' agin and then it was all up wid me. Then Pipes and de Sheriff went back on me and I did n't care. Bowser stuck to me the longest. He got de kids took care of. He don't know I 'm out, or he 'd turn up. I tried to find him, but nobody don't know where he was a-workin' — none of de bar-rooms I 've tried. Oh, but it was tough ! But it 's all right now, d'ye hear ? All right ! I got a job up in Harlem, see ? I 'm gittin' orders for coal." And he touched a long book that stuck out of his breast-pocket. "And I 've got a room near where I work. And I tell ye another thing," and his hand sought mine, and a peculiar light came into his eyes, "I got de kids wid me. You just oughter see de boy — legs on him thick as your arm ! I tell ye that 's a comfort, and don't you forgit it. And de little gal ! Ain't like her mother ? what ! — well, I should smile ! "

HIS LAST CENT

JACK WALDO stood in his studio gazing up at the ceiling, or, to be more exact, at a Venetian church lamp which he had just hung and to which he had just attached a red silk tassel bought that morning of a bric-à-brac dealer whose shop was in the next street. There was a bare spot in that corner of his sumptuously appointed room which offended Waldo's sensitive taste — a spot needing a touch of yellow brass and a note of red — and the silk tassel completed the color-scheme. The result was a combination which delighted his soul; Jack had a passion for having his soul delighted and an insatiable thirst for the things that did the delighting, and could no more resist the temptation to possess them when exposed for sale than a confirmed drunkard could resist a favorite beverage held under his nose. That all of these precious objects of bigotry and virtue were beyond his means, and that most of them then enlivening his two perfectly appointed rooms were still unpaid for, never worried Jack.

"That fellow's place," he would say of some

dealer, "is such a jumble and so dark that nobody can see what he 's got. Ought to be very grateful to me that I put 'em where people could see 'em. If I can pay for 'em, all right, and if I can't, let him take 'em back. He always knows where to find 'em. I 'm not going to have an auction."

This last course of "taking his purchases back" had been followed by a good many of Jack's creditors, who, at last, tired out, had driven up a furniture van and carted the missing articles home again. Others, more patient, dunned persistently and continually — every morning some one of them — until Jack, roused to an extra effort, painted pot-boilers (portrait of a dog, or a child with a rabbit, or Uncle John's exact image from a daguerreotype many years in the family) up to the time the debt was discharged and the precious bit of old Spanish leather or the Venetian chest or Sixteenth Century chair became his very own for all time to come.

This "last-moment" act of Jack's — this reprieve habit of saving his financial life, as the noose was being slipped over his bankrupt neck — instead of strangling Jack's credit beyond repair, really improved it. The dealer generally added an extra price for interest and the trouble

of collecting (including cartage both ways), knowing that his property was perfectly safe as long as it stayed in Jack's admirably cared-for studio, and few of them ever refused the painter anything he wanted. When inquiries were made as to his financial standing the report was invariably, "Honest but slow — he 'll pay some time and somehow," and the ghost of a bad debt was laid.

The slower the better for Jack. The delay helped his judgment. The things he did n't want after living with them for months (Jack's test of immortality) he was quite willing they should cart away; the things he loved he would go hungry to hold on to.

This weeding-out process had left a collection of curios, stuffs, hangings, brass, old furniture, pottery, china, costumes, and the like, around Jack's rooms, some of which would have enriched a museum: a Louis XVI. cabinet, for instance, that had been stolen from the Trianon (what a lot of successful thieves there were in those days); the identical sofa that the Pompadour used in her afternoon naps, and the undeniable curtain that covered her bed, and which now hung between Jack's two rooms.

In addition to these ancient and veritable "antiques" there was a collection of equally

veritable "moderns," two of which had arrived that morning from an out-of-town exhibition, and which were at this precise moment leaning against the legs of an old Spanish chair. One had had three inches of gilt moulding knocked off its frame in transit, and both bore Jack's signature in the lower left-hand corner.

"Didn't want 'em, eh?" cried Jack, throwing himself on to the divan, temporarily exhausted with the labor of hanging the lamp and attaching the tassel. "Wanted something painted with darning-needle brushes—little tooty-wooty stuff that everybody can understand. 'See the barn-door and the nails in the planks and all them knots!'"—Jack was on his feet now, imitating the drawl of the country art-buyer—"'Ain't them natural! Why, Maria, if you look close ye can see jes' where the ants crawl in and out. My, ain't that wonderful!'"

These remarks were not addressed to the offending canvas nor to the imaginary countryman, but to his chum, Sam Ruggles, who sat hunched up in a big armchair with gilt flambeaux on each corner of its high back—it being a holiday and Sam's time his own. Ruggles was entry clerk in a down-town store, lived on fifteen dollars a week, and was proud of it. His daily fear—he being of an eminently economical and practical

turn of mind — was that Jack would one day find either himself tight shut in the lockup in charge of the jailer or his belongings strewed loose on the sidewalk and in charge of the sheriff. They had been college mates together — these two — and Sam loved Jack with an affection in which pride in his genius and fear for his welfare were so closely interwoven that Sam found himself most of the time in a constantly unhappy frame of mind. Why Jack should continue to buy things he could n't pay for, instead of painting pictures which one day somebody would want, and at fabulous prices, too, was one thing he could never get through his head.

"Where have those pictures been, Jack?" inquired Sam, in a sympathetic tone.

"Oh, out in one of those God's-free-air towns where they are studying high art and microbes and Browning — one of those towns where you can find a woman's club on every corner and not a drop of anything to drink outside of a drug-store. Why are n't you a millionnaire, Sam, with a gallery one hundred by fifty opening into your conservatory, and its centre panels filled with the works of that distinguished impressionist, John Somerset Waldo, R. A. ?"

"I shall be a millionnaire before you get to be R. A.," answered Sam, with some emphasis, "if

you don't buckle down to work, old man, and bring out what 's in you — and stop spending your allowance on a lot of things that you don't want any more than a cow wants two tails. Now, what in the name of common sense did you buy that lamp for which you have just hung? It does n't light anything, and if it did, this is a garret, not a church. To my mind it's as much out of place here as that brass coal-hod you 've got over there would be on a cathedral altar."

"Samuel Ruggles!" cried Jack, striking a theatrical attitude, "you talk like a pig-sticker or a coal-baron. Your soul, Samuel, is steeped in commercialism; you know not the color that delights men's hearts nor the line that entrances. The lamp, my boy, is meat and drink to me, and companionship and a joy unspeakable. Your dull soul, Samuel, is clay, your meat is figures, and your drink profit and loss; all of which reminds me, Samuel, that it is now two o'clock and that the nerves of my stomach are on a strike. Let — me — see" — and he turned his back, felt in his pocket, and counted out some bills and change — "yes, Sam" — here his dramatic manner changed — "the account is still good — we will now lunch. Not expensively, Samuel" — with another wave of the hand — "not riotously

—simply, and within our means. Come, thou slave of the desk — eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die — or bust, Samuel, which is very nearly the same thing!"

"Old John" at Solari's took their order — a porter-house steak with mushrooms, peas, cold asparagus, a pint of extra dry — in honor of the day, Jack insisted, although Sam protested to the verge of discourtesy — together with the usual assortment of small drinkables and long smokables — a Reina Victoria each.

On the way back to the studio the two stopped to look in a shop-window, when Jack gave a cry of delight and pressed his nose against the glass to get a better view of a small picture by Monet resting on an easel.

"By the gods, Sam! — is n't that a corker! See the way those trees are painted! Look at the air and light in it — not a value out of scale — perfectly charming! — *charming,*" and he dived into the shop before Sam could check him.

In a moment he was out again, shaking his head, chewing his under lip, and taking another devouring look at the canvas.

"What do they want for it, Jack?" asked Sam — his standard of merit was always the cost of a thing.

"About half what it's worth — six hundred dollars."

"Whew!" burst out Sam; "that's nearly as much as I make in a year. I would n't give five dollars for it."

Jack's face was still pressed against the glass of the window, his eyes riveted on the canvas. He either did not hear or would not answer his friend's criticism.

"Buy it, Jack," Sam continued, with a laugh, the hopelessness of the purchase making him the more insistent. "Hang it under the lamp, old man — I 'll pay for the candles."

"I would," said Jack, gravely and in perfect seriousness, "only the governor's allowance is n't due for a week, and the luncheon took my last cent."

The next day, after business hours, Sam, in the goodness of his heart, called to comfort Jack over the loss of the Monet — a loss as real to the painter as if he had once possessed it — he *had* in that first glance through the window-pane; every line and tone and brush-mark was his own. So great was Sam's sympathy for Jack, and his interest in the matter, that he had called upon a real millionnaire and had made an appointment for him to come to Jack's studio that same afternoon, in the hope that he would leave part of

his wealth behind him in exchange for one of Jack's masterpieces.

Sam found Jack flat on the floor, his back supported by a cushion propped against the divan. He was gloating over a small picture, its frame tilted back on the upright of his easel. It was the Monet!

"Did he loan it to you, old man?" Sam inquired.

"Loan it to me, you quill-driver! No, I bought it!"

"For how much?"

"Full price—six hundred dollars. Do you suppose I'd insult Monet by dickering for it?"

"What have you got to pay it with?" This came in a hopeless tone.

"Not a cent! What difference does that make? Samuel, you interest me. Why is it your soul never rises above dollars and cents?"

"But, Jack—you can't take his property and"—

"I can't—can't I? *His* property! Do you suppose Monet painted it to please that one-eyed, double-jointed dealer, who don't know a picture from a hole in the ground! Monet painted it for me—me, Samuel—ME—who gets more comfort out of it than a dozen dealers—ME—and that part of the human race who know a good

thing when they see it. You don't belong to it, Samuel. What's six hundred or six millions to do with it? It's got no price, and never will have any price. It's a work of art, Samuel — a work of art. That's one thing you don't understand and never will."

"But he paid his money for it and it's not right" —

"Of course — that's the only good thing he has done — paid for it so that it could get over here where I could just wallow in it. Get down here, you heathen, take off your shoes and bow three times to the floor and then feast your eyes. You think you've seen landscapes before, but you haven't. You've only seen fifty cents' worth of good canvas spoiled by ten cents' worth of paint. I put it that way, Samuel, because that's the only way you'll understand it. Look at it! Did you ever see such a sky? Why, it's like a slash of light across a mountain pool: I tell you — Samuel — that's a masterpiece!"

While they were discussing the merits of the landscape and the demerits of the transaction there came a knock at the door and the Moneybags walked in. Before he opened his lips Jack had taken his measure. He was one of those connoisseurs who know it all. The town is full of them. A short connoisseur with a red face —

red in spots—close-clipped gray hair that stood up on his head like a polishing-brush, gold eyeglasses attached to a wide black ribbon, and a scissored mustache. He was dressed in a faultlessly fitting serge suit enlivened by a nankeen waistcoat supporting a gold watch-chain. The fingers of one hand clutched a palm-leaf fan; the fingers of the other were extended toward Jack. He had known Jack's governor for years, and so a too formal introduction was unnecessary.

"Show me what you've got," he began, "the latest, understand. Wife wants something to hang over the sideboard. You've been doing some new things, I hear from Ruggles."

The tone of the request grated on Jack, who had risen to his feet the moment "His Finance" (as he insisted on calling him afterward to Sam) had opened the door. He felt instantly that the atmosphere of his sanctum had, to a certain extent, been polluted. But that Sam's eyes were upon him he would have denied point-blank that he had a single canvas of any kind for sale, and so closed the incident.

Sam saw the wavering look in his friend's face and started in to overhaul a rack of unframed pictures with their faces turned to the wall. These he placed one after the other on the ledge of the easel and immediately above the Monet,

which still kept its place on the floor, its sunny face gazing up at the shopkeeper, his clerk, and his customer.

"This the newest one you've got?" asked the millionnaire, in the same tone he would have used to his tailor, as he pointed to a picture of a strip of land between sea and sky—one of those uncertain landscapes that a man is righteously excused for hanging upside down.

"Yes," said Jack, with a grave face, "right off the ice."

Sam winced, but "His Finance" either did not hear it or supposed it was some art-slang common to such a place.

"This another?" he inquired, fixing his glasses in place and bending down closer to the Monet.

"No—that's out of another refrigerator," remarked Jack, carelessly—not a smile on his face.

"Rather a neat thing," continued the Moneybags. "Looks just like a place up in Somesbury where I was born—same old pasture. What's the price?"

"It isn't for sale," answered Jack, in a decided tone.

"Not for sale?"

"No."

"Well, I rather like it," and he bent down closer, "and, if you can fix a figure, I might"—

"I can't fix a figure, for it isn't for sale. I didn't paint it—it's one of Monet's."

"Belongs to you—don't it?"

"Yes—belongs to me."

"Well, how about a thousand dollars for it?"

Sam's heart leaped to his throat, but Jack's face never showed a wrinkle.

"Thanks; much obliged, but I'll hold on to it for a while. I'm not through with it yet."

"If you decide to sell it, will you let me know?"

"Yes," said Jack, grimly, and picking up the canvas and carrying it across the room, he turned its face to the wall.

While Sam was bowing the millionnaire out (there was nothing but the Monet, of course, which he wanted now that he could n't buy it), Jack occupied the minutes in making a caricature of His Finance on a fresh canvas.

Sam's opening sentences on his return, out of breath with his run back up the three flights of stairs, were not complimentary. They began by impeaching Jack's intelligence in terms more profane than polite, and ended in the fervent hope that he make an instantaneous visit to His Satanic Majesty.

In the midst of this discussion — in which one side roared his displeasure and the other answered in pantomime between shouts of his own laughter — there came another knock at the door, and the owner of the Monet walked in. He, too, was in a disturbed state of mind. He had heard some things during the day bearing directly on Jack's credit, and had brought a bill with him for the value of the picture.

He would like the money then and there.

Jack's manner with the dealer was even more lordly and condescending than with the would-be buyer.

"Want a check — when — now? My dear sir! when I bought that Monet, was there anything said about my paying for it in twenty-four hours? To-morrow, when my argosies arrive laden with the spoils of the far East, but not now. I never pay for anything immediately — it would injure my credit. Sit down and let me offer you a cigar — my governor imports 'em and so you can be assured they are good. By the way — what 's become of that Ziem I saw in your window last week? The Metropolitan ought to have that picture."

The one-eyed dealer — Jack was right, he had but one eye — at once agreed with Jack as to the proper ultimate destination of the Ziem, and

under the influence of the cigar which Jack had insisted on lighting for him, assisted by Jack's casual mention of his father — a name that was known to be good for half a million — and encouraged — greatly encouraged indeed — by an aside from Sam that the painter had already been offered more than he paid for it by a man worth millions — under all these influences, assistances, and encouragements, I say, the one-eyed dealer so modified his demands that an additional twenty-four hours was granted Jack in which to settle his account, the Monet to remain in his possession.

When Sam returned from this second bowing-out his language was more temperate. "You 're a Cracker-Jack," was all he said, and closed the door behind him.

During the ten days that followed, Jack gloated over the Monet and staved off his various creditors until his father's semi-monthly remittance arrived. Whenever the owner of the Monet mounted the stairs by appointment and pounded at Jack's door, Jack let him pound, tiptoeing about his room until he heard the anxious dealer's footsteps echoing down the stairs in retreat.

On the day that the "governor's" remittance arrived — it came on the fifteenth and the first

of every month — Sam found a furniture-van backed up opposite Jack's studio street entrance. The gravity of the situation instantly became apparent. The dealer had lost patience and had sent for the picture; the van told the story. Had he not been sure of getting it he would not have sent the van.

Sam went up three steps at a time and burst into Jack's studio. He found its owner directing two men where to place an inlaid cabinet. It was a large cabinet of ebony, elaborately carved and decorated, and the two furniture men — judging from the way they were breathing — had had their hands full in getting it up the three flights of stairs. Jack was pushing back the easels and pictures to make room for it when Sam entered. His first thought was for the unpaid-for picture.

"Monet gone, Jack?" he asked, glancing around the room hurriedly in his anxiety to find it.

"Yes—last night. He came and took it away. Here" (this to the two men), "shove it close to the wall," pointing to the cabinet. "There — now go down and get the top, and look out you don't break those little drawers. What's the matter with you, Samuel? You look as if somebody had walked over your grave."

"And you had no trouble?"

"Trouble? What are you dilating about, Samuel? We never have any trouble up here."

"Then it's because I've kept him quiet. I've been three times this week and held him up — much as I could do to keep him from getting out a warrant."

"Who?"

"Your one-eyed dealer, as you call him."

"My one-eyed dealer is n't worrying, Samuel. Look at this," and he pulled out a receipted bill. "His name, is n't it? 'Received in full payment — Six hundred dollars.' Seems odd, Samuel, does n't it?"

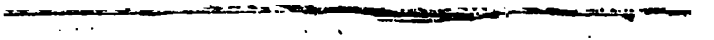
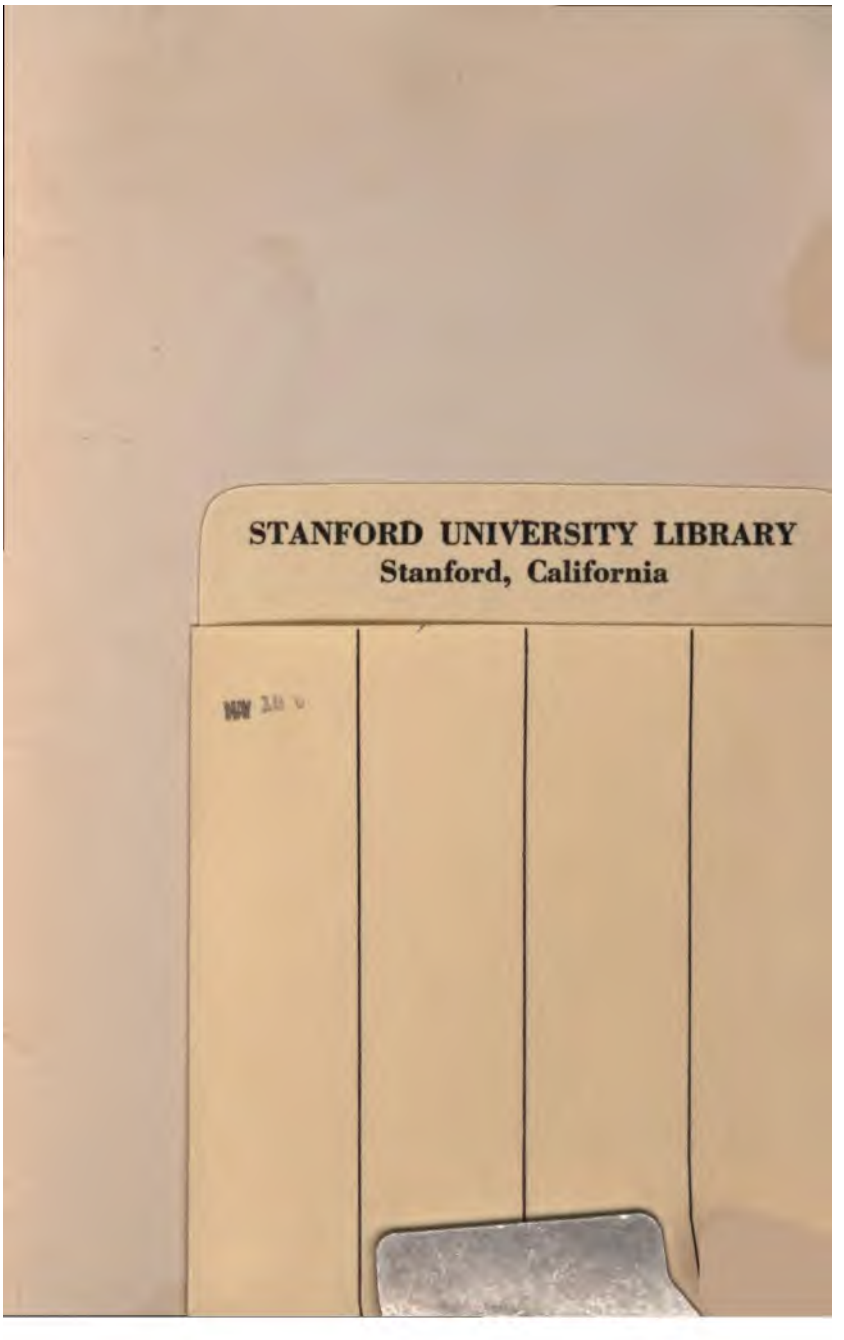
"Did your governor send the money?"

"Did my governor send the money! My governor is n't so obliging. Here — don't stand there with your eyes hanging out on your cheeks; look on this — found it yesterday at Sighfor's. Is n't it a stunner? Bottom modern except the feet, but the top is Sixteenth Century. See the way the tortoise-shell is worked in — lots of secret drawers, too, all through it — going to keep my bills in one of 'em and lose the key. What are you staring at, anyhow, Sam?"

"Well — but, Jack — I don't see" —

"Of course you don't see! You think I robbed a bank or waylaid your Moneybags. I did — took twelve hundred dollars out of his clothes in

a check on the spot — wrote it right there at that desk — for the Monet, and sent it home to his Palazzo da Avenue. Then I took his dirty check, indorsed it over to that one-eyed skinflint, got the balance in bills, bought the cabinet for five hundred and eighty-two dollars cash — forgive me, Samuel, but there was no other way — and here is just eighteen dollars to the good" — and he pulled out some bank-notes — "or was before I gave those two poor devils a dollar apiece for carrying up this cabinet. To-night, Samuel — to-night — we will dine at the Waldorf."



STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
Stanford, California